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W. L. Sheldon,

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WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE AUTHOR.

W. L. Sheldon, 4200 Morgan St.,
St. Louis, Missouri.

AN ETHICAL MOVEMENT



AN ETHICAL MOVEMENT

A VOLUME OF LECTURES

BY

Waller
W. L. SHELDON

LECTURER OF THE ETHICAL SOCIETY OF ST. LOUIS

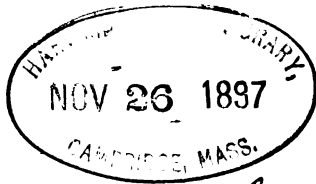
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The Author

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TO
DR. FELIX ADLER
UNDER WHOM I SERVED
MY APPRENTICESHIP FOR TWO YEARS
IN NEW YORK CITY
This Volume
IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

A NOTE OF EXPLANATION TO THE READER

IN publishing this volume of lectures it should be stated quite frankly that I am not presuming to offer a new or important contribution to ethical literature. It may be that there is not a single original idea contained in these pages. But any one man's opinions have a certain value *simply as opinions*, if they have come to him through considerable thinking, study, and experience. The thoughts outlined in these lectures have developed for me one after another in my efforts to meet the problems of life as these problems have arisen in connection with the work of an ethical lecturer. I have not entered into the metaphysical aspects of the subject, preferring to wait and do that some time later on, after much longer reflection. The attitude taken in the volume is neither that purely of the scholar nor that of the man wholly immersed in practical life. A teacher in ethics or religion occupies a position between these two classes. He will read extensively and think a great deal; but his deepest convictions or beliefs will be shaped while he is seeking to apply his reading or thinking to the questions of life as they come up from day to day. Only from this standpoint is it possible that these lectures may be worthy of perusal. When a man endowed with a deeply religious nature, and educated in the conventional orthodox faith, is driven gradually to abandon many of the views of his earlier days, naturally he will be compelled to think out all the great issues of life over again. This Ethical Movement met the cravings of my religious nature, and made up to me for what I had lost. It has given me something to live for and believe in. And now, in drawing to the close of the first ten years of labour as Lecturer of the St. Louis Ethical Society, I am bringing these thoughts together

and publishing this volume in commemoration of that event. It should be stated with the greatest explicitness that I am speaking only for myself in these lectures, and that no other person and no other body of people should be considered as represented by them. While ethical societies have been established in numbers both in Europe and America, each, however, stands by itself, independent of what may be said or taught on other platforms. Yet I cannot refrain from expressing how much I owe to my friends and co-workers, Mr. S. Burns Weston and Mr. W. M. Salter. But above all others, there is *one* with whom I have discussed these subjects, to whom I have submitted several of the manuscripts of these lectures, to whom I owe any number of valuable suggestions, and through whose influence I came into the work, the one by whom I have been inspired more than by any other living man — and the one whom I regard as the true leader of the Ethical Movement of to-day. He would probably disagree with many of the views in this volume. Yet this only makes my debt of gratitude for his sympathy and help all the greater. That one, it is needless to say, is the one to whom this volume is dedicated.

W. L. SHELDON.

ST. LOUIS, MO., February, 1896.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE ETHICAL SOCIETIES

ABOUT twenty years ago Dr. Felix Adler, then lecturer at Cornell University, took the first steps leading to the organization of the Society for Ethical Culture in New York City. The movement had a number of strong and earnest supporters at the start. Lectures were given on Sunday mornings in Standard Hall. After a short interval the Society moved to Chickering Hall, and for upwards of fifteen years the lectures were given there during the winter season.

The Society had not been long established before it became active in practical reform work in the city. The leader of the movement, ably seconded by those who gathered around him, inaugurated plans for district nursing in the homes of the poor, tenement-house reforms, and a number of other important undertakings, the chief of which was a large kindergarten and day school that should give educational opportunities of the most advanced kind to the children of the humbler classes. This latter branch is now known as the Workingmen's School. Several hundred are taught in it, and it has become an influential factor in educational work throughout the United States. It is supported by an association, separate or distinct from the Ethical Society, but has been guided all along by one and the same leader.

The history of the Society in New York would require a volume in itself, so varied and important have been its practical undertakings. The inspiration for all the effort came mainly from the Sunday morning lectures. The movement stood apart from the churches, and yet it seemed to be able to inspire men to do much the same kind of work as the church had been supposed exclusively capable of accomplishing. Already some years

ago it was apparent that the audiences had outgrown Chickering Hall, and now the Sunday morning lectures are held in the large and beautiful auditorium of Carnegie Hall. Most of the addresses are by the leader himself, although occasionally Dr. Adler invites others to occupy the platform in his place.

After the Society had been active for a few years, a number of young men from different parts of the country were drawn to it and became eager to enter upon the same line of effort. They worked in New York in each instance for a length of time, studying the Society's methods, acting under the guidance of the lecturer and rendering him such assistance as they were capable of. Then one after another they went to found new societies in other cities. Twelve or thirteen years ago Mr. W. M. Salter became the lecturer of an ethical society in Chicago. Later on another such society was founded in Philadelphia under the guidance of Mr. S. Burns Weston. The fourth to be established was in St. Louis ten years ago. Other young men are now in New York also expecting ere long to go forth in the same cause. Each of these societies has its own individuality. None of them are as large in numbers or play so important a rôle in their respective communities as the Society in New York. Yet there is a certain marked resemblance in the character of their efforts and work. The same peculiar blending of ethical religion with practical measures for social reform, has been a striking feature of the whole movement in America. Many a stranger attending the lectures would at first be a little at a loss to know whether or not he was present at the "services" of a church. These four societies, each with a regular lecturer, hold their meetings on Sunday mornings, the meetings always being open to the public.

At first the conservative element looked askance upon the movement and in some ways were strongly antagonistic to it. There was something unique about it which the outside public could not understand. These new societies seemed to bring all the various classes together. Both the mechanic and the man of wealth were seen co-operating here for the same purpose. Gradually some of the opposition to the movement has subsided, although it is still apparent and probably will survive for a length of time.

The Society in New York had been established about fifteen years when the movement spread to Europe. Dr. Stanton Coit, who had been at work with Dr. Adler, went to London and founded the West London Ethical Society, while at the same time doing an important work in establishing a Neighbourhood Guild and other similar educational undertakings, such as he had also been influential in organizing in this country. A few years since, Dr. Adler visited Europe for a year and passed several months in Germany. The ground for a Society there had been prepared by the translation and publication in German, of a volume of lectures by Mr. Salter, and a further volume, later on, by Dr. Coit. While there Dr. Adler was invited to address a number of people at Berlin, including professors at the University and other influential citizens. They became at once fired with enthusiasm over what he had said to them, and immediately organized an Ethical Movement in that country. The president of the Society is Prof. Wilhelm Foerster, at that time rector of the great University in that city. One of the most active leaders was the late Prof. Georg von Gizycki, who was connected with the same institution. Mainly through his noble efforts the movement spread throughout Germany, until now there are a score or more of ethical societies in the various cities of that Empire. From Germany the movement spread south and east, and we now hear of such societies in Venice, Italy, and even in Buda Pesth, Hungary, as well as in Vienna. At Berlin a weekly paper has been published for a number of years under private management, known as "Ethische Kultur." The development of the work in Germany has been rapid.

On the other hand, altogether independent of the societies in America or in Germany, an ethical movement has been developing in England under another set of leaders, such as Mr. Bernard Bosanquet, Mr. J. H. Muirhead, Prof. D. G. Ritchie, Mrs. M. McCallum, and others. Besides their other undertakings they have established the London Ethical Society, which meets in Essex Hall Sunday evenings. The Society has no one regular leader or established lecturer. Addresses are given at its meetings by some of the ablest scholars in Great Britain. Another similar ethical society exists at the University of Cambridge, under the leadership of Prof. H. Sidgwick. This other

movement in Cambridge and London is something quite apart from the work inaugurated by Dr. Adler and Dr. Coit and has a character altogether its own. How wide the difference may be or how close the resemblance, it would be quite impossible at this distance to say. In this country, also, ethical societies are springing up spontaneously here and there, not directly connected, though in touch with the one in New York City. This has occurred at one or two of the large universities.

Other important features of this Ethical Movement have grown out of the efforts of the leader of the New York Society. Some years ago at his suggestion there was founded *The International Journal of Ethics*. This is now published quarterly under the management of Mr. S. Burns Weston, who gave up his position as director of the Ethical Society of Philadelphia—his place having been taken there by Mr. W. M. Salter, while Mr. M. M. Mangasarian, who had been formerly associate lecturer in New York, took charge of the Society in Chicago. This *Journal of Ethics* has an international editorial committee consisting of Henry C. Adams, Ph.D., Ann Arbor; Felix Adler, Ph.D., New York; Giacomo Barzelotti, Ph.D., Naples; Stanton Coit, Ph.D., London; Alfred Fouillée, Ph.D., Paris; Harald Höffding, Ph.D., Copenhagen; Fr. Jodl, Ph.D., Prague; J. S. Mackenzie, M.A., Cardiff, Wales; J. H. Muirhead, M.A., London; Josiah Royce, Ph.D., Cambridge, Mass.

Not long after this, steps were taken to found a "School of Applied Ethics." The work was divided into three departments, Religion, Economics, and Ethics; the head of the first being Prof. C. H. Toy of Harvard University, the head of the second being Prof. Henry C. Adams of the University of Michigan, and the head of the third department being Dr. Adler himself. Summer sessions for three or four years were held at Plymouth, Mass. The lecturers came from all the leading educational institutions of the United States. The second summer a course in "Greek Ethics" was given by Mr. Bernard Bosanquet of London. This School was established at a convention of the ethical societies of the United States, but it has a separate board of trustees, and is not *directly* connected with any of the societies—it being a part of the general ethical movement developing at the present time throughout the world. The next

session of the School will probably be held at Gloucester, Mass., which may become the permanent seat for the summer sessions. The secretary of the School is Mr. S. Burns Weston.

Naturally it would be difficult to describe the bond of sympathy between these institutions in Europe and America. Measures have been taken to bring about some form of union between the various ethical societies in the different countries, so as to have an international organization. An international committee has been formed, including American, English, and German representatives. As yet, however, nothing definite has been accomplished. Each society stands by itself, and could not be represented through any other society. As is to be expected, there is a great deal of disagreement as well as sympathy manifested. What the common bond may be no two persons would be able to agree upon in detail. In many instances members of orthodox churches are working here side by side with religious radicals.

At the same time these societies have taken a common name, and to that extent they are alike in the emphasis they put on ethics, although the character of the emphasis would be described differently by different individuals. No one man, therefore, is authorized to speak for the Ethical Movement beyond giving his personal opinions or convictions concerning it. The attitude of one group of men might meet with disapproval from another group. Yet it should be said that a few years ago the societies in America, which have grown out of the parent organization in New York City, formed an Ethical Union in this country, with the following statement as a section of the constitution :

The general aim of the Ethical Movement as represented by this Union is to elevate the moral life of its members and that of the community; and it cordially welcomes to its fellowship all persons who sympathize with this aim, whatever may be their theological or philosophical opinions.

This step may, later on, lead to further developments and bring about more active co-operation.

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AN ETHICAL MOVEMENT

I

THE MEANING OF AN ETHICAL MOVEMENT

THERE is a profound significance in the new Emphasis on Ethics manifest at the present time both in Europe and America. It is doubtful whether there has been any other epoch in human history — with the possible exception of the age of Athenian philosophy — when thinking people have been so much inclined to recognize the importance of treating the problems of the day from an ethical standpoint.

I am disposed to attribute this new impulse in part to the combined influence of Kant in Germany, of Darwin in England, and, in this country, of Ralph Waldo Emerson. The teaching of Immanuel Kant reconsecrated the idea of Duty, and the halo survives in spite of any changes of attitude which may have taken place toward other features of his great System. Charles Darwin, with his discovery of the method by which organic life has gone through its processes of transition on this planet, threw a great new light upon the groping philosophy of evolution; opening out the whole province of the social sciences

as well, so that now when we desire to help our fellows we know how to go about it without necessarily injuring the very purpose we are striving for. Emerson added the prophetic fire, speaking as with a "Thus saith the Lord," without system or method, straight from his moral consciousness. His "Sovereignty of Ethics" ranks with Kant's "Apostrophe to Duty," and belongs to the "inspired literature" of modern times.

But it would be quite impossible to locate this new emphasis on ethics among any particular body of living men. It is becoming apparent everywhere. The universities of learning and the schools of theology give signs of it. We may discern it in the tone of the encyclical letters of the present Roman Pontiff. It is noticeable among the laity and the clergy; it is felt deeply both by those who have definite religious convictions and by those who have none at all. No institution and no class of men are privileged to claim an exclusive monopoly of this new tendency, — although we are glad to observe that it is taking shape in organized form among independent groups of people in various countries. A decided "change of front" is apparent, and we are called upon to explain it and account for it.

We refer to the tendency as *new*. By that we do not wish to imply that it is wholly of recent appearance. On the contrary, we should rather say that it had its birth among the great ethical leaders of bygone ages. It is therefore in part only a revival. We are sounding a neglected chord in history, taking up once more an aspect of religion already emphasized by those inspired seers of earlier times. They

were the leaders. We have to carry on their work, although we may be the modest and reverent disciples of their spirit rather than of their exact teachings. I can but feel that this is what they themselves would have preferred that we should do. Every century calls for a new application of the old principles, a "choosing out" of those teachings from the storehouses of past wisdom and experience, which may be most adapted to the needs of the age to which they are to be applied. No system of teaching in its concrete shape could be complete for all time. People always make such a choice or selection, whether they are conscious of it or not. They ignore one aspect and emphasize another.

In seeking to explain this Ethical Movement I shall endeavour to do it in simple, everyday language. We may accomplish it most successfully by contrasting two great tendencies as they are presented to us when we survey the past.

Religious teaching has always had two phases, which are often quite distinct, although it is conceivable that they might blend together. In the one its effort is to bring us on to our knees in the attitude of worship. It cultivates the "devotional side" of our natures, awakening the mood of spiritual exaltation or the rapture of self-surrender. It is essentially emotional in character, although appealing more to those emotions which less actively affect one's conduct. It warns us of the vanity of human life, of the worthlessness of mere pleasure, of the futility of our hopes for satisfaction here on earth. Its conception of evil is concentrated in the phrase "love of the world." Its attention is mainly

on the life after death. Its method for attaining spiritual culture is to "think on God"; and this, indeed, may be regarded as its most characteristic feature. He is everything, we are nothing. To worship Him is the only true life. This type of religion makes us reflect on our weakness, our nothingness. The human virtue it cultivates is chiefly the sense of pity. Sometimes it lays a great deal of stress on beliefs, and judges men by the ardour of their loyalty to "creeds"; though this is not one of its essential or universal features.

I call this the theological side of religion. Its keynotes are *worship* and "God."

Then by contrast we have the other phase. Its emphasis is on what we are *doing*, and how much we can do if we try. Its effort is to keep us constantly thinking on what life is for, and whether we are true to the purposes of life. It makes a great deal of the present moment, bidding us not to despise the "treasures of earth," but to use them for moral or spiritual ends. It reminds us that life and all that we hold is a trust, and that every opportunity is to be utilized, no matter how meagre. It insists that if there is any future life at all, we shall not get it unless we earn it by determined effort, through what we accomplish with this life here and now. Its appeal is to the active side of our natures, to the motives which affect the will. It, too, has a great deal to say about the sorrows of human existence, but mainly for the purpose of goading us to a realizing sense of what we might do to remove the causes of those sorrows. It would lead us to grapple with the problems of life in a practical way, to get at the

methods by which we may not only mitigate suffering, but alter the conditions which produce it.

Further, it makes us acknowledge our mutual responsibility for all the evil in the world and our mutual share in it; and also to see that if anything is to be done, it is to be done by *us*, and not through some extraneous influence. It acts as a constant spur to the improvement of positive conduct. It gauges us less by what we think and believe, and more by what we do, especially by the interest we take in human progress and by what we do for our fellow-men. It addresses itself to the higher impulses within, to conscience and the sense of duty; and is inclined to ignore, not necessarily an Invisible Being, but an invisible external *Authority*. Its method for attaining spiritual culture is through the indirect influence exerted upon us by our moral efforts. These efforts are what refine and cultivate the soul and develop true spirituality.

I call this the ethical side of religion. Its key-notes are *doing* and "Duty."

These are the two phases. They may not be so sharply defined when we meet with them in positive teaching, because they are seldom presented entirely separate from each other. Something of both is manifest in nearly all religious history. But in every individual life and in every age where high aims are observable, one or the other is in the ascendancy. That is the most important point. When there is a disposition to throw the emphasis on the ethical side, I should call it an Ethical Movement.

Religious teachers everywhere, I believe, are becoming conscious of an appalling contradiction between

what men believe and the way they live. We desire to influence character, and to find those methods which may be most effectual for that purpose. May we not accomplish this by turning the attention of mankind toward what the human race is suffering, toward the needs of our fellow-men, toward the perfection and purification of our inner nature, toward Conscience and Duty, as much if not more than by means of the sublime sacraments of the Church?

For ages the debate has gone on as to the true idea of the Deity, the historic value of the Scriptures, the relative worth of the various sects or religions. But amid all these discussions the old, old query has been ever pressing, — why something more cannot be done to influence human conduct. To lead one individual to become a better man, to inspire him with higher ideals and more exalted purposes, — may not this be worth for the future of the world as much as to prove or disprove the historic value of a "Bible," or to present convincing evidences of the existence of a Deity?

May it not be more important to awaken and foster in the characters of men those high ethical attributes we have been accustomed to attribute to a Deity, than to instill in the *minds* of men certain beliefs about such a Being? Should it not be our consideration to care more to live the kind of life followed by Jesus than to throw the stress of feeling and enthusiasm on the worship of Jesus?

Religious teaching has not been exerting its true influence on the public mind, because it could not adequately apply itself to the actual daily affairs of human life. Whether, by throwing the stress on

moral issues we may be able to restore the right hold for religion, is the problem to be solved by a true Ethical Movement.

We should lay the emphasis on that one element or feature which is quite independent of any change that may occur through historic research or philosophical speculation. This, it appears to me, would be the method by which to make the religious spirit absolutely sure and abiding for all coming time. There should be something upon which all men could find a meeting-ground. We must look for it in ourselves, because there alone can we discover our common inheritance. We are each children of some special race, or clime, or nationality; most of us have been educated along some special line of theological belief. In a great number of directions we have become "set" in a certain way. These individual distinctions are deep and strong; they control us, no matter how much we may desire to shake them off. But behind them or underneath them all is a common spiritual endowment; and this endowment, I believe, is the aspiration to reach a higher level of being, — or, expressed more popularly, the desire on the part of each one *to be a better man and to have a better human society.*

This desire is not something vague, mystical, or far away, taking us into the realms of the remote and supersensible. It is definite, concrete, and positive, in the original form in which it awakens within us. It may exist faintly at times, and seem almost to die away altogether. But it has been in us at some period or other in the course of our lives. A man in the very depths of his nature is not quite con-

tent with what he is at any one moment ; he would always like to be something else, a trifle better, a little further along in the scale of being. From this standpoint the difference between man and man is only a matter of degree. We are haunted with visions of a "better self" and a "better human world." Our common meeting-ground, therefore, is in the mutual interest we take in "the good life."

The new Emphasis on Ethics would have for its aim to bring into the foreground this universal interest or desire, and to utilize all conceivable means for developing it and making it become a dominant factor in the conduct of every living man.

We must recognize the fact that human ambition has changed ; it is bent now on getting something out of this life on earth. There is no use struggling against this tendency. The new mastery over nature has given to the multitude a hope which can never again be quenched. Among the mass of the people there is a determination to establish a Kingdom of Heaven of some kind here and now. The shape which that kingdom may assume will depend upon the efforts we put forth to infuse the plans for it with a moral purpose or an Ethical Ideal. Average men are now imbued with the impression that there is a method of getting positive definite satisfaction out of life, if only the method can be found. They will no longer be content to wait and have the scales balanced after death. Satisfaction in some form, here and now, is what they are determined to secure.

An Ethical Movement must meet this situation. We are at the critical epoch when moral or spiritual aspirations are in danger of decline or shipwreck.

Never in all history has there been a period when true civilization was in greater peril.

Religious teaching should have but one task before itself at the present moment : it must adjust itself to these new conditions. Instead of looking away from earth it must concentrate its attention upon the practical side of daily life and everyday needs. It has been too much disposed to think of morality all by itself as "secular," neglecting to emphasize the voice which speaks within, out of regard for the voice which speaks from Above.

In the same way as I have ventured to describe the two sides or phases of religion, it devolves upon me to explain what I consider to be the main *purposes* of a movement devoted to emphasizing this ethical phase, which to some of us seems of such paramount importance.

It must certainly begin with a re-examination of the moral aspects of all the fundamental problems pertaining to human life. We have new conditions to deal with, and a new conscience to awaken. The sense of duty is already there ; but it is not keenly alive to the new issues. It has been "drilled," as it were, on the difficulties which perplexed the human soul a thousand years ago. Those difficulties survive ; but questions now confront us which would have had no meaning to the earlier conscience. The determined effort on the part of the great mass of people to get all that is to be had out of this life on earth, and the changes in our social and political institutions brought about by this effort, have been forcing us into new conditions and presenting us with problems far more delicate and complex than ever before.

Conscience is also a creature of habit ; it responds quickly enough in the presence of the experience on which it has been trained, and yet may continue inert or passive when new phases of life appear with which it has not been accustomed to deal. The older methods for moral and spiritual culture are not adequate to the crisis. It is much easier now for conscience to become dulled and inactive ; and we have to quicken its susceptibilities for the new issues ahead of us. A self-scrutiny of another kind is called for. We need to watch our motives from another standpoint and to gauge our conduct by the new and advanced ideals growing out of the demands of the human consciousness.

This Emphasis on Ethics implies therefore a new study of the ideal of the "Family" and of the "State" ; a new analysis of the Rights of Property and of the Rights of the Individual Man. It demands a further scrutiny into the true basis of Reform Effort ; it calls for an appreciative consideration of the various Social Ideals. It insists upon a deeper apprehension of the conceptions of "Happiness," "Virtue," "Justice," "Conscience," "Duty," "Religion." Not only Duty but *duties* require a much more thorough and exhaustive investigation. It is vitally important that we pay closer attention to the problems pertaining to the relationships in the home, as well as to the relationships in the commercial world. These are all "sacred" subjects.

The new Emphasis on Ethics requires too that we make a further survey of the world-literatures from this other standpoint. We are to glean everywhere for those thoughts and sentiments which may serve

to guide the struggling will, nerve the human spirit to its task, or illumine the conscience with deeper experience. We are to search the records of the past for the heroic deeds which may rekindle the waning fire of moral enthusiasm. We should analyze the lives of men and women who have been leaders in shaping the course of human thinking or promoting the progress of the race. We are to study the religions of other lands and of former ages—not that we may construct a new “patchwork” system made up of shreds of many religions, but that we may by this means interpret the aspirations of the common heart of man whence those religions have sprung.

We are to read the masterpieces of George Eliot or Shakespeare, of Goethe or of Dante, as if these writers had given utterance to something deeper and grander than they themselves were conscious of.

Our purpose is to affect human motives and to interpret the moral ideals original in human nature. And this is some of the material at our command. It is all “sacred” literature.

The new emphasis we are describing would not have us forget the truly ethical side in our political institutions. We are to study the influence of Jefferson, Hamilton, or Webster and what they have done in building up the structure of our State or Nation; just as religious teachers have been accustomed to study the work of David or Saul and what had been done by those men for “Israel.” Children of to-day should recite with religious awe the sublime utterances of the great bygone leaders of their country, such as Washington’s “Inaugural Address” or Lin-

coln's "Speech after the Battle of Gettysburg," — or similar noble words from other heroes, according to the nation or race to which the young may belong, — just as the children of Palestine two thousand years ago recited the inspired utterances of the bygone leaders of their race, in language which the later world has consecrated into a "Bible." We should foster a reverence for our State or Nation, throwing a halo about "government" and "law." Whatever pertains to this aspect of my subject is of solemn, awe-inspiring significance. The "Duties of Citizenship" should furnish a theme for every religious teacher. Every nation is a "chosen people." It is all "sacred" history. Economics and Political Science are only so many other methods of studying the Ethical Ideal.

And I believe that in this our attitude we are to show the same degree of ardour and enthusiasm, the same high feeling, the same sense of awe and consecration, which other men have been accustomed exclusively to feel and display when dealing directly with such subjects as "Jesus" or "God."

Yet this is not all. A still heavier task is before us. We have to reconsecrate conscience *in the minds of the young*. The importance of the ravages committed upon other "established beliefs" is trifling, in comparison with the havoc brought about by the loss of respect for the "judge that sits within" at just that time of life when the higher instincts are taking shape. Those who have had the spiritual welfare of the race in their charge may be especially responsible for this; inasmuch as they are often not content to let conscience stand by itself, but have connected it

with something outside, making the awe we should feel for it dependent upon one or another system of theology — until it is lost in a maze of bewildering abstractions, or is looked upon as an illusion of the past. Yet it is the foundation upon which the entire superstructure of our civilization must rest. When it alters, everything else alters.

In early life, everything depends on what we are going "to have reverence for." One always has a greater respect for certain facts as well as for certain persons than one does for others. The fact of all facts, the belief of all beliefs, for the child to respect, is Conscience. He should think of it as resting on itself for its authority. We must educate it, but always as "guided by the sense of awe." In the dissolution of old institutions now going on, it will be called into requisition, perhaps, as never before.

It will be seen that *to me* this movement is not a philosophy, but a religion.

And so I believe there should be societies organized for the exclusive purpose of fostering and developing this new Emphasis on Ethics. Books may be written upon it; but that is not enough. The press may agitate the cause, and that may help it. The Church may contribute its share. But they cannot any of them do the work completely. If we are to bring a neglected phase of religion back into its true significance and importance, we may have to do it by giving, for the time being, almost *exclusive* concern to it. In order to accomplish the result, it may be even necessary to give to this aspect an exaggerated degree of interest.

Furthermore, I believe that these societies should

hold their meetings and have their addresses or discussions not simply on the week days, but on Sundays. It is vital that the peculiar significance attached to that period of the week be brought to bear on this particular phase of religion. We must throw about ethical problems the peculiar feelings of depth, sacredness, awe, and consecration which are associated with a "religious service." Christendom has set apart that one day for a consideration of those problems which are regarded as the deepest and most important, and for that reason we should dedicate it to the purposes I am describing. By the very separateness with which we emphasize this tendency of which I am speaking, we shall establish its identity with that which is highest and best in religion. People may be members both of the Ethical Society and the Church. But the Ethical Society should do its work by itself in order to give the necessary degree of stress to its efforts.

It will be observed that I have been dealing almost exclusively with questions as to the line of *teaching* to be pursued by such a Movement. Yet that would be only one aspect of my subject. The "lecture," or "sermon," or "meeting," or "religious service,"—whatever name we may give to it,—should be merely the starting-point for the real work to be done by an Ethical Society. The day for preaching, exclusively as preaching, has gone by. An Institution must command attention by the *work* it does in the community where it is located. Only a small number of people can ever be reached or influenced by the "spoken word." No religious society can show a right to exist—least of all an Ethical-religious Soci-

But apart from any special type of organization, an Ethical Movement is arising everywhere, without distinction of sect or creed or system of philosophy. It consists of the serious and earnest individuals who, in the presence of this possible downfall of high character and nobler manhood, are becoming more and more willing to forget the other differences, to pass by diversities of theological or philosophical belief, in order to concentrate their attention upon rescuing and developing the moral ideal. The spirit, therefore, which now exists among a few, may by and by reach out over the world, and then the Universal Church will be constructed on the basis of an Ethical Society.

This new spirit or tendency I see spreading abroad, is lifted for me above the question of momentary success or failure. My faith in it does not depend on whether any special organized effort in this direction triumphs or not. From the little that has come under my observation in these last few years, it now stands for me as an indubitable belief, that in the ages to come—though when and how far off I cannot say—this spirit or tendency amid every change, will be the one surviving standpoint for the future religion and the future Church. Study and experience have alike proven to me that the disposition to mutual helpfulness lies back in human nature, and is prior in its origin to any or all specific religions. It has made certain for me that the will of man has something to lean upon in man himself; that there is a craving after the higher life in the human consciousness, whencesoever it may have come. And I stand as firm to-day in the conviction, from practical

experience, as I stood in former years from abstract reflection, that this moral impulse, with its hunger after righteousness, will rise into ever greater and greater significance as human nature advances to a clearer comprehension of its own character and possibilities.

α As to the question whether in laying such an emphasis on ethics we shall be separating from the traditions or the authority of the past, that must be determined by each individual for himself. For my part, in taking this stand I feel more in accord with the real spirit of the teachings of Isaiah and Jesus than when I am attending the "services" of a church. My supreme consideration is on the one point. Whence it came or who may be supposed first to have called attention to it,—all that is of less consequence to me. Those are the questions which we can safely leave to history to be solved. But this other problem, what is to be done here and now in elevating and purifying the hearts of men, in lifting once more the standard of morality, in quickening the Conscience, in establishing a higher gauge for human motives,—this is what we should not leave to the mere external laws of development. It is what we ourselves must do and accomplish. The attitude of worship, if it ought to come, will then come of itself. We shall be brought to our knees because we cannot help it.

II

BEING RELIGIOUS—WHAT IT MEANS TO AN ETHICAL IDEALIST

RELIGION, I sometimes think, is the saddest and yet the most beautiful word in human language. The sweet and the bitter are both commingled there, — gentleness, humility, self-sacrifice, and brotherly love on the one hand; and on the other, bigotry, superstition, cruelty, and aggressive self-assertion. What prejudice between one man and another might have been avoided, what life-long misunderstandings could have been escaped, how much more just and true we might have been in judging one another, if only we had all been able to accept one common meaning for the term! And yet we use it and cling to it, because we are afraid that we should lose something out of our lives by giving it up.

We seem to agree; and then, as we go on thinking, we disagree. At the outset, we should nearly all be united in our impressions, connecting the word at once with theistic conceptions, with the belief in God. We do this almost by instinct, having been led from our earliest years to associate it with that Name. But then the confusion begins. Among those who have affected us as being truly religious both in character and life, some were quite destitute of that belief.

What shall we say of a man like John Stuart Mill, who had no assured convictions about Deity, or as to what comes after death, and yet with religious ardour devoted his practical energies and all the resources of his philosophy to the cause of struggling and oppressed humanity? What of Buddhism? It was "without a God," and yet we consider it a religion.

At other times, this inspiring term presents itself to our minds as if pertaining especially to external forms, to prayer or worship. At this point, too, one is in perplexity. There are men who never show that devotional spirit; and still we look upon them as being religious. I think of Immanuel Kant. Surely he was a religious man; his whole philosophy indicates it. But he could not have been given to prayer; for he even went so far as to say that as one advances in the higher life one may quite cease to pray.

Then again, we may treat religion wholly as a matter of sentiment; attaching it not to an outward form of service, not to an intellectual belief, but to an attitude of the heart, to the emotional side of our natures. Most of us at times are kindled to awe and reverence. Who does not have noble aspirations as he looks up at the stars, or does not bow instinctively before the grandeur of lofty character? But then we hesitate, on remembering those who have displayed such exalted feelings while leading most unworthy lives. Were they truly religious? What, for example, of Lord Byron? On the other hand, we think of Darwin, and of the apparent *absence* in him of such grand emotions while he went on steadily

unfolding the secrets of Nature. He none the less awakens in us the sense of religious awe by the story of his life. Shall we refuse to connect religion with the name of Darwin?

No, we are not quite prepared to associate this sacred word exclusively with the heart, with outward worship, or with an intellectual belief. We know the inspiring influence of the "Angelus" of Millet, or the "Assumption of the Virgin" by Titian. We appreciate the grandeur of thought which has assumed positive shape in the creeds. We value the beauty and worth of noble feeling. But religion implies something more than any of these. We cannot take man "in sections" in this way; for it would be contrary to the structure of the human soul. Rather, we look upon religion as an attitude of the whole self, judging a man in this regard by what he *is*, by his character and the main purposes of his life, by *the direction toward which his nature points*, and not by some one feature of sentiment or belief or worship. And thus it is that we speak of a person as having a "religious nature," apart from his mere views or opinions. We can see, therefore, how it is that a bond of sympathy should exist between men of diverse creeds and unlike ceremonial observances.

In spite of all the bitterness connected with the use of it, apart from the credulity associated with it, I believe that to most of us the word "religion" will always imply certain high qualities of character. Does it not indicate something delicate and refined? Will it not recall those pure, deep, lofty natures, a few of which we all have known? Is there not a suggestion about it of a serene, unselfish inward-

ness, of a certain steady loftiness of disposition? Do we not connect it with that beautiful old word "spirituality"?

We may not be able to define it with exactness, owing to its complexity. We get our idea of it as a composite impression from all the people we have known or read about, who have been mentioned to us or looked upon by us as "religious people." This impression has been stamped upon us not so much through men's doctrines and teachings as through their personalities. It may be a blending of the "Antigone" of Sophocles with Thomas à Kempis, or the character of Savonarola with that of such men as Lincoln or Washington.

In this way our mothers may have had a great deal to do with shaping this composite idea. They can be women of many types, representing every shade of belief and every form of worship. Yet, when thinking of them as religious, what comes to one's mind is rather the kind of persons they were, and not so much those beliefs or that worship. And so it is that there are mothers who may not have been very much disposed to observe the outward forms, or much inclined to show the devotional spirit; and yet they too may have seemed truly religious and possessed of all the essentials of religion.

I knew a mother of this latter kind,—the mother of an old schoolmate of mine. It would be impossible to assert that she was an example of the "outward observances." She was not much given to prayer, rarely crossed the threshold of a church, seldom opened the leaves of a Bible. But whenever I think of her, the words "divine," "sacred," and "religious"

come back to me. She had all that peculiar fineness and delicacy of soul-fibre which we are instinctively accustomed to associate with this composite idea. There was a strength in that woman which would endure any trial or difficulty without flinching; a devotion that had no thought of self; an ability to make the commonplace, ordinary duties of life seem more ennobling and elevating than work in literature, art, or philosophy. What she believed in I could never ascertain. She did not appear to have "beliefs" as we conventionally use that expression. But she had something better. And she died as she lived, with the same calm equanimity, the same unwavering steadfastness, the same unfaltering serenity.

What was the secret of it all I cannot say. But there was something in that mother which was great and rare. When thinking of her it gives me a sense of awe, similar to the feelings I have when looking up at the stars. What that mother *was*, more than all my study and thinking, has given me my conception of the religious spirit.

It is for such reasons that we cling to the word "religion," whatever changes may have taken place in our personal convictions or in the world's philosophy. For my own part, I love it and many of the traditions belonging to it, although not able to agree with the restrictions placed upon its meanings by others. It is precious to me by its poetry and music, its architecture and paintings, by the noble aspirations which it has given us, and the beautiful lives in which it has been incarnate. We hold to the assurance that in face of all the necessary transformations which may occur in human emotions, in forms

of worship, or in beliefs about the supernatural, we can still retain the hallowed associations we have had with this term. It is not right that the deep thoughts and feelings connected with it should be regarded as belonging exclusively to any particular creed or body of men. In surrendering it, we might tacitly confess that we could not be in touch with some of the best and noblest minds of past ages or of the present time.

The cluster of associated feelings or impressions which have gathered around this beautiful word are always changing, and yet in their essential features they continue pretty much the same. And so I would like to analyze them, to place them over against each other, and see whether we cannot all draw nearer together on a basis of closer fellowship and more brotherly spirit, when judging as to whether a man is truly religious.

Whether a man has a religion depends in the first place on his view of life, or on his impression as to where he belongs in the Universe. This thought is best conveyed in the beautiful language of the poet, speaking of the child "moving about in worlds not realized"; or in the saying of Emerson: "We are encamped in nature, and not domesticated." Every deep character must have had something of this experience. It is a sense of being different from the world around him, a consciousness of being superior in himself to the earth whereon he dwells and the outer universe in which he lives. With the majority this dies away early. Most people are so preoccupied with daily cares and work, that they are obliged to think two or three times before they catch

the significance of the point to which we are alluding. The child would understand it at once, if only we could express it to him in his form of speech. Later in life we are made to realize it only on special occasions. It may come home to us when we go away for rest to the mountains or the sea. At such intervals we are led to look into ourselves. Nature, more than human society, stirs us to this attitude. The closer we come in contact with the outer world, the more we are led to perceive our kinship with it and yet our separateness from it. There is something in the sound of the waves beating on the sand, or in the view of mountain ranges, which serves to emphasize this peculiar feeling. It is the impression of *belonging to another order of existence*.

Do we not associate religion with the spiritual side of our natures? Has it not always been looked upon as the antithesis of materialism? Is it not supposed to make us "grow in the spirit"? Would it not lead us to place a higher value on the inner life of the soul, because the soul is essentially superior to physical nature?

It is not that we are altogether of another world, not that we are absolutely unlike the earth whereon we dwell; but we are conscious that there are orders and degrees,—as it were, a higher and lower everywhere. Our order is not the same as that of the outer world. This is what we imply in saying that the human being has a soul. It is not the same as the old distinction between this and another world, or between matter and spirit. Strictly speaking, as we know, there is only one world and one universe. But there is a difference in the order or degree. We

are higher or superior to what we look out upon, — the earth, the air, the mountains, and the sea. The religious man is the person who is conscious of this difference. How religious he is, may depend on how strong an impression this fact makes upon him.

It is religion which emphasizes unity everywhere; only it is a unity of the spirit, and not of the fleeting pageant of the outer world. *We belong to the truly real.* It is this phase which connects religion with our thoughts of an Invisible Being. That Being is the great Spiritual Centre, and we belong to its order. The old conception is true, that man was made in the image of his Maker. We may not be able to have definite beliefs about that Being; indeed, it is far more vital that we should have such beliefs about our own being, its meaning and destiny and the laws it should obey. But our kinship is with the great Central Fact. Of that much we are assured.

We might express the distinction on which we lay so much importance, as the contrast between idealism and materialism; although we do not need to launch ourselves on some speculative theory in order to comprehend the point. We do not require a system of philosophy in order to be aware of this experience. It is not a question of theory, but an attitude of one's nature; for one may be a materialist in character and an idealist in philosophy. When a man feels himself perfectly at home in the world, is content to live from hour to hour, letting one day be like the next, and one year like another year, without any care for growth or advance, satisfied to live on in that way forever, without any sense of contrast between himself and the outer world, or of anything superior in himself, which

he has to cultivate and develop, — that man is a materialist, though he may have the most fixed and positive beliefs in another world and in an overruling God. As a matter of fact, his other world would be just like this world, with more of it.

But when one is conscious of this difference between himself and external physical nature; when there is an actual impression on his mind that he belongs to another order of existence, and that he would like to rise to the full scope and height of that order, so that he shall become as superior in his aims as he is by the fundamental quality of his being, — though he be wavering in his philosophy, perplexed with doubts, or unable to construe the universe except in terms of “matter” or “force,” yet in the true sense of the term that man is an Idealist. He is possessed of the first facts of religion; and it is by observing whether he has a sense of this spiritual superiority in himself that we shall judge him.

This can be the experience of the most uneducated person. Usually a man lets it die away by merging himself in active life; and, as we have already intimated, it revives only at rare intervals. I think it must always come home to a man when his first child is put into his arms. Then as he watches its mind develop, sees the *sense of self* awakening, observes the child acquainting itself with the new world, seeming so much of a stranger and yet so much at home; beholds the mind unfolding, the soul opening its eyes and closing them again, — all this brings back to him what he went through himself. Probably if it were not for child life, religion would

die out of the world. We have to make a positive effort in order to preserve this sense of our true superiority. We become materialists in spite of ourselves. The struggle for existence draws us away and makes us more and more belong to the world.

If we feel perfectly at home all the time, quite content to live on from day to day, and have one year like another, we shall not be disposed to vex ourselves with the query about what life is for. The more we merge ourselves in the mere struggle for bread and possessions, the less we shall trouble ourselves over the significance of human destiny.

If, however, we are impressed more and more with the deep significance of the spiritual side of our natures, then we shall keep on thinking about the problem, demanding of ourselves that we discover the meaning of life. We shall be resolute in seeking to find out the purpose of human existence, eager to understand what this superior order is to which we belong. Whenever a man is truly aiming to comprehend and explain the meaning of life, instinctively we think of him as religious, whether or not he believes that he has accomplished his purpose. By that very effort, he shows that he is conscious of "moving about in worlds not realized," or of belonging to another superior order of being.

And so it is that one religious person feels a kinship with another, in spite of differences of belief or divergencies in philosophy. We realize our brotherhood in the sphere of the higher natures. If for this first attribute of religion we were to give an illustration, I should mention the predominating tendency of mind in the poet Wordsworth, — or I would sug-

gest that one should read the chapter on "Cosmic Emotion," by William Kingdon Clifford.

But we do not have the religious spirit solely because of a sense of belonging to a superior order of existence, although this is the starting-point of all true Idealism. But there is implied, in the second place, a *surrender of the will* to something. This is the most fundamental attribute, because it presents the positive side of the great issue we are discussing. Religion has its supreme value in that it serves as the agent for breaking and taming the wild caprices of the human will. It puts the soul of man into a harness. If we ask ourselves what is the one quality more than another by which we form an impression as to whether a person is religious, it would be by determining whether the restless self had been brought under control, whether the will had made its surrender.

What is it by which poets and prophets alike judge in determining whether a man is irreligious? It has been mainly by the display of arrogance, crudely expressed in the old mythology as a spirit of defiance towards the gods. The one characteristic which offends us most, which seems the weakest and most contemptible in a human being, the trait which appears supremely coarse, low, secular, and materialistic, is *vulgar, unwarranted self-assurance*. Religion has always done its best and noblest work in checking the growth of this offensive quality of character, by subduing the human spirit to the path which is suited to it. If we go back and recall the great religious leaders whom we admire and revere, the feature in them most inspiring to us is that of sub-

lime humility, the absence of arrogance or unauthorized self-assurance. This was the grandeur in the life and personality of Jesus and Buddha.

We can scarcely comprehend how it is that just in this direction we most need guidance and help. But if we examine closely, we shall observe it to be true. We have this tremendous force within us, and it makes us feel ourselves almost divine. But when it begins to act, we stagger and hesitate; we realize that it must be subdued to a purpose. It requires some kind of guidance and authority to which to subject itself. It shows itself the strongest and accomplishes the most, when it is, as it were, "in service." It seems that we actually *want* to obey.

In this domain it is not the mind but the will of man which seeks for relief. Mind as mind would never have a religion, but only a philosophy of religion. In the long run, of course, there must be intellectual conviction behind the attitude we take. But the truth-seeking tendencies of our nature are not the forces which drive us toward it. No; it is the human will, seeking for guidance and support, which falls back upon a religion. The most refined natures are those which have learned this lesson of obedience. We recognize this spirit in all the greatest teachings of the past. We see it in the "Psalms" of the Hebrews, in the "Imitation of Christ" by Thomas à Kempis. It comes out beautifully in the lines of Browning:—

"And thus looking within and around me, I ever renew,
With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too,
The submission of Man's nothing-perfect to God's All-Complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit I climb to his feet."

It is the strong nature, more than any other, which shows this desire. The examples we have in mind were men of tremendous strength, who at the same time realized that their energies were most efficient when in a harness, knowing that they could accomplish most when they had learned to obey.

You will remind me that religion is born of our weakness, and now I am saying that it is only the strong characters who can be truly religious. But we can agree, even in view of the seeming contradiction. The weak nature cannot surrender his will, but is carried away by it, hurried hither and thither by the unruly and unruled forces within. Such weakness develops only superstition. It knows no steady guide and is dominated by fear. The weakness out of which religion springs, on the contrary, makes us feel how infinitesimal we are in the presence of the Infinite. It would leave us strong up to the full capacity of our being, but keep us from presuming any further.

The stronger we are, the more we appreciate this contrast and the more disposed we are to concentrate our energies on some one ideal purpose, so as not to dissipate them nor waste them in contesting with universal law. Only the strong man, therefore, who is also conscious of his weakness, can make a true surrender.

Hence there is a third attribute or quality by which we judge. A great deal depends on what the something is to which one makes his surrender. A man may concentrate all his energies on the motive for greed, and use every capacity of his being for that one purpose. His will is obedient to the one

intense longing of his nature. But we should never think of that man as religious. Greed cannot be the something to which a man is to surrender his will, if he is to have a religion. A person might centre all his energies in a passion for power, until it gave him a control over all the other wild impulses of his nature and overmastered all other caprices. But an ambition of that kind cannot be the supreme something to which we have referred. We should say, on the contrary, that such men would be examples of glaring irreligion, of cold, heartless materialism. They are the creatures of one impulse, rather than of many impulses. That is the only difference. Whatever their beliefs might be, we should always think of those men as destitute of the religious spirit.

It must be either to an ideal principle or to an ideal personal master that we surrender the will, if we are religious or have a religion. In a word, the Supreme Something must be inclusive, and never be just one's own satisfaction. The authority need not be personal, but it must stand over and above everything else. It must embrace all the outside world, both men and things, in so far as we can comprehend their special aims or destiny. The limitation of a man's knowledge may, therefore, set bounds to the extent of his religion, but never to the spirit of it. The grandeur of the religious motive is that it treats all aims and desires as subordinate to one Mighty Supreme Aim.

As individuals in the most ordinary walks of life, performing the most commonplace duties, we can have this thought ever before our minds. The spirit within

us grows stronger as we each say to ourselves: "I am doing this for an ideal purpose. What I am doing is in obedience to law. When I act in this way, then it seems as if we were all doing the same thing together." It is that thought, more than any other, which saves us from crude Materialism. It comes out in the exquisite couplet of the poet Herbert:—

"Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine."

It is not necessary that the word "Thy" in these lines should apply to a Personal Father or to an infinite God, although such would be the experience with the majority of men. But it should at least be the expression of what the person understands to be the properly inclusive aim of mankind. He may look farther, if his thought will permit it, and express it as the "All-inclusive aim of the universe," or "The will of God." The latter, however, is not essential to the spirit of that wonderful couplet. It is the purpose which signifies and consecrates and gives the religious aspect. One must at least have an ideal aim. How inclusive the aim can be, will depend on the stage of his intellectual culture; but it must always be as wide as his horizon.

We can sustain the spirit under difficulties and hold the motives in control, simply by keeping such a thought always before our attention. Men but half appreciate the significance of having a fact continually before the mind. If it is a depressing fact, it will depress them. But if it is an inspiring fact, the mind will continue to be stirred by it. The grand tendency of true religion has been to elevate

man's aims beyond himself, so that he shall want to make his purposes accord with the aims or purposes of the whole human race and of the whole universe so far as he understands it. Some men may have this truth or fact before themselves only as a feeling or sentiment; their lives may be dominated by it, and yet they may not know that it is there; they may not be conscious that it is a religion or that they have a religion. We know such persons; and when we meet them, although sometimes their horizon is limited, their knowledge restricted, their sphere of effort very slight, they are still an example to us.

One adjective more than any other conveys to us that peculiar quality of the something to which the will has to surrender itself in order to be religious. I have in mind the word "sacred." Some may put a very narrow meaning into the word, and want to connect it exclusively with their peculiar beliefs or doctrines. But they have no such right or privilege. It is a beautiful term, interwoven with the deepest and best feelings of the human heart. We do not need to associate a theology with it. We know what it means, even if we cannot fully define it. No man would ever speak of the "sacred" motive of greed; or the "sacred" ambition after power; or the "sacred" enthusiasm for profit or material aims; neither would he speak of "sacred" fanaticism nor of "sacred" bigotry.

We use the expression when speaking of something beyond the self, beyond our private individual purposes. When the religious motive has developed into a prejudice or bigotry, then the element of aggressive self-assurance has appeared; the motive is

no longer sacred and could not be called religious. We apply that word rather when our motives become expansive, when they blend with the one supreme aim. That is to say, we use it in reference to an ideal principle or an ideal master. In either case the usage is legitimate and in keeping with the best feelings of the human heart. Otherwise expressed: In order to be religious we must surrender the will to *sacred ideals*.

If an illustration were desired for this special aspect, we might give it by blending together certain qualities of the Greek statesman Pericles with the author of the "Imitation of Christ."

What we most seek for in religion is a means of strength which shall be in reserve, to uphold us when we begin to stagger and the will power is giving way; for then we require something which can steady the soul and sustain us in the motive to live. Our great need is to have a support to fall back upon when the pathway of life is not smooth and easy, when we are driven in on ourselves and want to get away from ourselves. At such moments there should be an ideal purpose to lift us out of self, so as to bring our lives back into the true pathway. If we are conscious of having such a resource, then we have a religion.

There are men who in a crisis wholly give way and succumb. Possibly this happens to the majority of persons, who never rise above the blow which has struck them. No Ideal, or Sacred Principle, or Personal Master had received their devotion or the surrender of their wills. They had taken existence as it came, and would have been satisfied if it had gone

on in the same way forever. But when the one thing they most care for is gone, when, for instance, the wealth or power has disappeared, or the ambition for display has been defeated, then the will is broken down, and nothing is there to hold it steady and nerve the man to go forward. Religion is always a stay or support against affliction or defeat. When a man has gone through this experience, it makes him even stronger or steadier than before, provided he has been previously under the sway of these three attributes of religion. It has yet to be proven that such an ideal principle cannot sustain us under any conceivable difficulty. As James Cotter Morrison has said: "A passionate ideal of excellence can so fill the mind that no pleasure is felt in anything but in efforts to realize it."

There have been many instances where this source of strength has existed and performed that service. But one cannot suddenly acquire it after the trouble has already arrived. The pity of it is that we do not know our need in advance. Only those who have had that means of inspiration beforehand will come out of the trial unscathed. Such epochs are the turning-points in our lives. Then we discover whether ideals have been exerting an influence upon us.

And now I shall venture to give the meaning or definition which we have been seeking. It is not presented as final or all-conclusive, but as gathering into one sentence the clusters of impressions we have been analyzing. *Religion implies the surrender of the will to ideal or sacred principles which are to us the expression of the true destiny or worth of the*

human soul. All that we have said could have been brought within these words. They express, in the first place, the inclusiveness which must accompany our aims if these are to be sacred; in the second, the submission of the passions and caprices of the will; and, in the third place, the consciousness that we belong to a superior or different order of existence from the outside world. But the definition which is frequently given at the present time, connecting religion with a mere emotional enthusiasm for ideals,—throwing the emphasis on the enthusiasm or the *emotionalism*,—strikes me as a very slim and unsatisfactory expression for those deep undercurrents of the soul which we have been accustomed to associate with this sacred word.

We have sought to lay stress on the fact that it is possible for a man to be religious without knowing it himself. I speak not so much to those who are working out an abstract system of thought, not to the men who can devote their lives to study and observation. Such men will probably wait until they can find for themselves a system of philosophy.

But the majority of persons are busy and preoccupied. They have their work to do, and it leaves them no time to philosophize. Yet there are men who in spite of their doubts on fundamental questions, uncertain in mind about what to think or believe, conscious that there is error somewhere, distrustful of their early teaching, who, none the less, would be glad to think that they could be religious; while they are troubled with the supposition that they cannot be so, unless they have certain beliefs, or conform to some outward service of wor-

ship. I venture to tell these persons that they can still have what they want and care for, in spite of their doubts and perplexity. Edward Caird spoke for many persons when he said: "It is one thing to have a religion, and quite another to understand what religion is." If a man seeks to cultivate a recognition for those three attributes we have sought to outline, he can still feel himself in sympathy with the great religious teachers of all ages, the prophets and the bards who have aspired to a higher life and struggled for a better kind of world.

The whole scheme of human thought is in the process of change. Philosophy is in a state of transition. But while all this is taking place, we want something to cling to. We are reluctant to look upon ourselves as out in the cold, barren of religious sympathies, unauthorized to have ideals or aspirations, solely because we are not convinced of the truth of one system of thought. I have ventured to assert that according to the real meaning of the term, and in agreement with the most fundamental standpoint of the human heart, we can still be religious while waiting for a philosophy of religion.

The definition we have given would apply to all the great religious leaders whom the world has ever revered. It unites them into one great brotherhood, whether it be Isaiah, Buddha, Thomas à Kempis, St. Augustine, George Eliot, or Emerson.

III

DUTY — TO ONE WHO MAKES A RELIGION OF IT

It is something so excessively near to us! God, the state, human society and its laws, the Natural World, — these all seem more or less on the outside. But duty is on the inside. We cannot get away from it by going somewhere else, because we cannot get away from ourselves.

There are, as I conceive, four great mysteries. The first is associated with our sense of the "oneness of things," or with our thoughts about the Ultimate Power as the centre of everything. It is the sheer mystery of being, — not this or that kind of being, but simply being as such. The second is the mystery of self, accompanied with the perplexing queries: "What am I?" "What is this self-consciousness?" "Is this self of mine the basis of all being?" The third is the mystery of suffering, and deals with the what, the why, or the wherefore of pain. It is the mystery of tears, or of the sorrow which no tears can relieve. The fourth, and the one which I consider the greatest and most solemn of them all, is the mystery of Conscience, or the Sense of Duty. What is this something within me, dictating to me, commanding me, saying to me, "Thou shalt," or "Thou must"?

I should like to go straight to the human consciousness itself, or to those everyday experiences which indicate what consciousness has to say about duty. No man can do this without being under the influence of some special theory. And yet it is always worth the while to make the effort. We may not get the clue, but we shall at least draw a little nearer to what we are seeking for. It is of more value in the end to know what one's consciousness asserts or does not assert, than to know what was or was not asserted on this matter by Plato or Socrates.

Can you explain why it is that a man should value anything more than his own life? We know this to be true of an immense number of people. Some will give up their lives in one cause, others in another. It is not life itself which we seem most to care for. If it came to a choice, we should rather die than be obliged to take a certain course of action. There is something in all of us that we would not surrender even at the cost of life. As one striking illustration of this point in literature we could mention the terse dialogue from the great drama, "Measure for Measure": —

"Claudio. O Isabel!

Isabella. What says my brother?

Claudio. Death is a fearful thing.

Isabella. And shamed life a hateful."

This was Shakespeare's ethics. He was simply interpreting human nature. To Isabel, as to many another, there was an evil worse than death.

It is not the loss of pleasure which we are think-

ing about, in saying there is something we value more than life itself. People cling to their conscious existence in spite of the most excruciating bodily tortures. Yet these same persons would prefer to die at once rather than be driven to acts which would make them utterly loathe and hate themselves. We might not all agree on what we most value; but there is no doubt that for every one of us there is *something* to which life itself is subordinate.

We ask ourselves, How is it possible that a man can love this human life, care passionately for earthly existence, and yet prefer to do what may cost him his life? What interest should the outcome of his acts have for him, if he is no longer here on earth to share in it? Others reap the good of his sacrifice. What motive has he for making such a surrender? There is something almost startling, as well as profound, in that farewell utterance of Socrates at the close of his trial, when he said: "The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die and you to live. Which is better is known only to God." Why is it that we are thrilled by that calm assurance? Is it not proverbial that self-preservation is the first law of nature? And yet we stand in awe before the majesty of an utterance which sets that law at defiance. He could have escaped death by flight. Why did he not do it? He gave the only answer: "It was contrary to Duty."

To my mind all this has but one meaning. It implies that we start out in life with an original *measure of values*. We do not come by it from thought or abstract reflection. It appears to be already there. Occasionally we ourselves are aston-

ished into recognizing the fact, although we should not have believed it on the assurance of others. But we are put to the test, and then we know it.

Is not this a direct experience of the human consciousness? It is profoundly suggestive, because in it we can see the basis of what is known as the Sense of Duty. If there is a certain original measure of values in ourselves, then there may be an inner voice demanding of us that we be loyal and true to this standard.

Why is it that men recognize the authority of duty at all? It seems passing strange. Why should they not do as they please? How does it happen that any person should care to obey this voice? There is mystery in the very fact that human nature is disposed to recognize such an authority.

The acceptance of an inner measure of values does not seem to have anything to do with special theories of religion, or with any particular view as to the future life. It is not anything new in human history. Centuries before the time of Jesus, Socrates was speaking of the Voice of Duty, and Plato was brooding over it in the groves of the Academy. Several hundred years later an Emperor of Rome, ruling over the civilized world, was thinking about it — yes, we might say was making it the basis of his religion. The one man in the world who was the most free to do as he pleased, because he had the most power of any man on the face of the earth, was recognizing the fact that he had to obey this Inner Voice. We can see plainly enough, therefore, that it started with no special religion; it belonged to no one Bible; it pertains to no one particular epoch. But why should

men at the present time, with all the enlightenment of the new thought, believe in such an authority? Philosophy has not overthrown it. We might almost say that it has been re-established theoretically through the influence of philosophy. The new civilization has not done away with it.

At first thought we associate it with what is irksome or against inclination. This is the naïve standpoint. It is something which interferes with us when we "want to do as we please," and so we are prone to dislike it and wish to get away from it. It is constantly checking us or urging us in another direction, making us act against nature so that we may be able to act according to nature.

It seems to stand in our way. We shrink from it, and strive to avoid it. Yet it pursues us all the time. We almost fancy that one could be perfectly happy if it were not for this persistent, relentless Voice. Why will it not let us alone, so that we can have a little peace? Why must we always be ajar in ourselves?

We look at Nature, we survey life everywhere,—the trees, the birds, the animal world. There is no such jar or conflict in their consciousness. They can be happy, and do as they please. But we who stand above them, we who look upon ourselves as the crowning product of evolution, we alone cannot have our own way; we cannot have peace and be happy. We, of all creatures in the universe, must be tortured and checked and held down, or urged along another line against our inclinations, by this relentless authority.

In the outside world there is peace, but in our-

selves there is endless strife. Something keeps saying to us, "You must!" The consciousness within ourselves appears to be broken up into a number of selves, each struggling for the mastery. We do not get much pleasure out of the conflict, and could often wish that it did not exist. Yet this is what most often connects itself with the idea of duty.

Human nature wants to go to the right or to the left, cornerwise, sidewise, angularwise, every other wise, only not straight ahead according to one rule.

It is only on special occasions that the agitation within us becomes extreme. Yet almost every day in one's life one has some such experience. It seems as if the great struggle of humanity in its whole past history repeated itself in every individual consciousness.

But look now upon the obverse side of the same experience, and then behold the contrast! We stand in the greatest awe before *other* men when *they* obey the sense of duty. We do not shrink from looking at it *there*, but admire the principle in them, though we do not like it when it interferes with us. Why is it that we reverence the persons who can walk through fire in order to accomplish a certain purpose? Why do we not look upon them as blind, or stupid, or mad? Read Wordsworth's poem "Laodamia," and you will see what I mean. We might not be equal to conduct of that kind ourselves, but we bow down before it in the lives of others. It is this regard that we pay to the conduct of other men, which indicates what is original in our consciousness. A man may be able to avoid bowing the head before his superior, but he cannot help bowing the heart.

This aspect of duty is crystallized into such beautiful form in the well-known lines of Tennyson that I quote them anew:—

“ To live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.”

I know that this may be very unsatisfactory to the dissecting knife of philosophy. But the average mind will read this with approval. That is the principle of conduct we admire so much when it is acted upon in the lives of others. Somehow we wish we were able to act in such a spirit ourselves.

In spite of ourselves we associate the idea of duty with *something absolute*. We cannot admit exceptional instances when we may refuse submission to its authority. It carries with it a sense of obligation. It would bind us down to something. It does not say you must obey this authority *if*; there is no “if” about it. Duty has the stern, severe quality just because we think of it as so unconditional. It always speaks in the imperative mood, with a “shall” or a “must.”

Almost everything else in life is qualified by circumstances. But there is the conviction about the use of the word “duty,” that it allows of no exceptions or qualifications. Some who were given to philosophical speculation have sought to introduce a utilitarian feature into the idea or principle we are analyzing. Yet they were distorting what is original in consciousness. The natural man may defy the sense of duty, but he will not reason it away or try to show that what he did was right, after all. It

is the popular view itself which connects the word "absolute" and the word "duty."

This is a cold aspect of the subject, I admit. It is not soft or pleasing, not gentle, sweet, or tender. It does not plead or beg or persuade; it *exacts*. We cannot think it strange under these circumstances that men have tried to argue duty out of existence. We are not surprised that as one of the first steps of the New Thought, an effort should have been made to reduce this idea to an illusion. Many a man would be only too glad to be rid of it. He would have such a sense of relief if he did not see any reason for recognizing this authority! But he may think about it as much as he pleases: he does acknowledge a certain measure of values, and will constantly be using it in this way. Duty is a growth of language itself. And language is a growth out of the consciousness of man. There must have been something in the human self which led the race of men to create such a word and to gather around it a multitude of such striking associations.

It is this unconditionality, the something absolute associated with the sense of duty, which explains why we apply it not to the mind or to the heart, but to the *will*. It is not our understanding that surrenders, it is not the heart that gives in; it is the will power which makes the choice and yields to this authority. Sometimes it strengthens and steadies us merely to speak the word "duty." In ethics we have less to say about the perfect heart or the perfect mind. They are subordinate. The ethical ideal is the Perfect Will.

Yet we shall see that this sacred principle can

appeal to the heart, that it can soothe while it controls us, that it can inspire while it dominates us.

We come now to a second cluster of impressions, still analyzing the popular mind, only asking how men use language. Duty somehow conveys to us a sense *that we do not belong to ourselves*. This, too, will seem like a paradox. The voice is within, speaking from ourselves to ourselves. And still we associate it with the other idea that a man's self is not his own property. Does this appear meaningless? Wait and judge. It is certainly one of the beliefs that men have had about the word "duty." You belong to something, you fit in somewhere.

It is the grand old thought about "the soldier at his post." The discipline of warfare trains a man in the capacity of staying at his post or doing the work to which he has been appointed.

The Voice of Duty is what holds him there. When death threatens him, he stands unflinchingly where he has been placed. Why should he stay there? He may not clearly know. What great purpose will it serve if he stays at his post? He may not be able to answer. Who put him there? Even on that point he may hesitate. But whether he knows or does not know, the impression is fixed indelibly on his mind that he is to continue there "on duty." And he stays. Duty *exacts* it of him. I remind you of a beautiful illustration of this point in that exquisite poem, "The Blind Spinner," by Helen Hunt Jackson.

When we use the word "duty," is it not just such an attitude that we take in reference to our whole life work? We do not know the entire order or scheme

to which we belong. But there is fixed in our consciousness a feeling that we are to stay in a certain niche and do a certain work. It may be irksome, and we may not like it. If it were wholly a choice for our own sakes, we should not stay there. But it is because of this something outside of ourselves to which we belong, that duty exacts it of us in spite of ourselves.

At this juncture the element of mystery enters into the sphere of ethics. The voice is heard in ourselves. But where does it come from? The measure of values is in the self. But who or what is behind it? Consciousness itself gives no complete answer. What we have is a suggestion of something *beyond*, an order that is outside of us and yet includes us. There is a hint of an Infinite and Eternal. We shall run a great risk if we venture too far on this issue, for we are now at the borderland where ethics and religion begin to blend together. The very thought of a system or order beyond ourselves gives us a tremor of awe. We should like to look through the veil, and at times we almost fancy that we can see beyond it. One can only say at this point: Take care, a misstep here may break the efficacy of the principle by landing us in a cloudland of superstition.

It is this second element that takes away the sombre aspect of duty. At first it was irksome, because it stood in our way; it was cold and stern; it applied to the will power. But in this other view it touches the heart. An element of gentleness and sweetness now pervades it. We drew back from its chilling absoluteness; but on thinking of it further,

we see it in another light. It gives us a *companion-ship* with something outside of ourselves.

The absolute, unconditional, obligatory quality of duty makes us feel alone, and throws us back on ourselves. It is as if we were lost in the open space of the universe.

But then comes this other thought: we are not acting all by ourselves. Something from the outside whispers to us, "I am greater than thou." It is that suggestion which stirs the heart, moving us to assume that we belong somewhere. It puts us in touch with our fellowmen; yes, with all living things, with inanimate nature, with the whole wide universe. Duty no longer strikes us as something altogether stern and sombre. We are glad to obey it, because it adds more to our life and puts us in accord with life everywhere.

You will see what I mean by recalling your early experiences. The child shrinks from obedience because it is irksome and against his inclinations. He does not like to obey. But then his attitude changes; he surrenders, and does what is asked of him. And, possibly to his own surprise, he discovers that it brings him pleasure. "How?" you ask. Why, it puts him in loving sympathy with his father and mother. It seems to add their life to his own. Their love is worth more to him than the temporary satisfaction of having his own way through disobedience. When he surrenders his will, he adapts himself to the order or the life of the home, and becomes a part of it. Greater happiness is given to him by belonging to the home than by belonging just to himself.

And thus it is in the larger sense when we are

mature. It is the same experience, only far more profound. I shall never forget the shock which came to me on first meeting the assertion of Fichte, "*Der Mensch ist nur ein Mittel zur Pflicht*" — "Man is only a means to Duty." But then, as I went on thinking about it, gradually it dawned upon me what he implied; until my whole inner being was illumined by it. We obey the voice of duty, and we adapt ourselves to a larger order. We are no longer quite alone. We join the world's family, and enter as it were into the system or order of nature.

Is not this the explanation of one very common experience? We have a battle with ourselves, wanting to go in one way while duty points us in another. We do not wish to obey that sacred voice, because we fancy it will defeat our purpose and bring us disappointment. We should be obliged to surrender our inclinations, and should regard this as a direct loss of pleasure. But then, after a severe struggle, we yield, and submit; we obey. And what happens? Why, a peace and calm settle down upon us that we had not dreamed of or anticipated. We feel a positive glow of satisfaction in that we did not take the other course. But why is it? The only answer occurring to me is that, when obeying the voice of duty, there is an instinctive feeling of having put ourselves in accord with a larger order, of having drawn nearer to the rest of the world. We are more in fellowship with all other life everywhere; we are less utterly alone than we should have been if we had acted on our first impulse. We are positively glad that there is something absolute about duty.

It is this second cluster of impressions, I fancy,

which has led many persons to assume that duty applied *wholly* to our *relation to others*.

People have sometimes defined it as "what we owe to our fellow-men." They think of it mainly or only as the principle which should control us in our dealings with others. One might almost fancy that duty would have no meaning save for those human relationships existing between man and man. It is called by some a mere "product of history."

Yet, for one, I believe otherwise. On close examination such an attitude may appear narrow and unsatisfactory, when we come to see that there is a third cluster of impressions pertaining to this beautiful word. Most of us associate duty with the *idea of rule or law*. This alters the aspect, collecting together another set of experiences and inclining us to think that there is something grandly impersonal about it after all. We are not content to view it as a mere set of outer relationships.

What we are commanded to obey is not a person, but a principle. This is implied in the very phrase, "duty for duty's sake." Such language, strictly construed, might be utterly meaningless. But phrases of this kind do not develop without implying *something*. They are a record or testimony of certain experiences, and the point would be to get at the experiences which they record. You could analyze the expression, and reduce it to nonsense. But you could not do the same with the subjective phase out of which the language took shape.

"Duty for duty's sake" merely suggests the popular conviction that the word has reference to a law, and not simply to a relation between persons. We

obey a principle, we surrender to a law and not to a man or personal power, when we obey this sacred Voice. This transfers the whole matter back into ourselves. It no longer presents itself to us as applying to a mere series of relationships. Duty is not a relationship between us and our fellow-men, but *between us and a law*.

I fancy this is the reason why men so often think of the stars in connection with the idea of duty. We look up into the skies, and say to ourselves that those stars are akin to us; they are doing what we are doing, although with us it is in the light of a self-consciousness. We mean that those stars are obeying a law, acting according to a system or order. It is not the will of a person to which they are surrendered, but they work together according to one principle. This is how we explain the exquisite lines about "Duty," by Wordsworth:

"Thou dost preserve the Stars from wrong;
And the most ancient Heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong."

Was it not strange that Wordsworth should have thought of the stars, those cold, inanimate objects, as being akin to us, or as connected with the idea of Duty? It was the poet rather than the philosopher who did it; but the poet is the one who expresses our first elemental instincts or instinctive thoughts.

There is no doubt that the sense of duty awakens *at the outset* through our relationship to others. Unless we stood in such an attitude to our fellows we should never have become clearly conscious of

this inner voice. It would have been there all the time. The measure of values would have existed just the same. But it is first brought before our consciousness through this life with others. In that respect we can say that it is a product of evolution. Human experience called it forth and developed it. But a supreme measure of values would have been lurking there all the time.

When the sense of duty has once been aroused, when we definitely see it there in our consciousness, then it is no longer restricted to those outside relationships. It is a rule or principle which is held before us for our obedience, giving us a clue as to the kind of character we have to preserve and develop, rather than a certain code which we have to obey.

We can see now why we actually value something even more than our own lives.

What seemed at first all to be on the outside now looks all to be on the inside. You realize that if you were the only conscious being in the Universe, if there were no other man or woman on the face of the earth, if there were no Supreme Companion, yet, alone in space with no other conscious fellowship anywhere, the Voice of Duty would still exist in you and call for obedience. I believe even then that there would be something you would care to preserve at the cost of life itself.

We see ourselves in other men's eyes; and suddenly there steals over us a flush of shame at some act we have been guilty of. But then later on, when we are alone, we look in upon ourselves where no other eye can see, and the shame comes back. What

is true here in reference to each man's life, may be equally true in reference to the course of history of the human race. Men first had their attention called to the subject through social relationships. The separate individual consciousness appeared later, — and also the separate Sense of Duty. But when once it had emerged in that form in the human race, it could not subside, any more than it subsides in each man's life when he is alone by himself and no longer subject to the eyes of others. After it has once been called forth, it continues wherever you are, however solitary you may be. It is a voice commanding your obedience to a law, no matter how limited your relationships become. The stars are moving steadily in their spheres; they are doing their duty. Are you moving steadily in yours?

It is sometimes called the "Voice of God." Perhaps this may be the true expression for it. But one can make a tremendous mistake by a careless misuse of that phrase. It is not such a voice commanding us to obey *Him*, but rather to obey the *law*. When Macbeth heard the voice crying "Sleep no more!" it was not something from the outside, not the thought of an offended Deity which haunted him. It was something *worse* than that, something even deeper. It was like one self pursuing another self, all within his own consciousness. An original principle in the nature of things and in his own original nature was confronting him, and exacting the penalty for his disobedience. There is enormous significance in this qualification. If we held to the first interpretation, it would make the moral commands only like so many arbitrary decrees. There would be no "changeless

unwritten laws." It would destroy even the dignity of Godhead itself. The grandeur of the subject is in the thought that the voice points us to something that is changeless and absolute. We obey the law, and not simply the Power who established it. Ethical religion implies on our part the same submission to ethical ideals or ethical law which others may render exclusively to the "Will of God."

I have endeavoured to bring together these clusters of popular convictions, so that each man could sift them down for himself. If I were to give a definition from this standpoint, it would be as follows: *Duty is the command of our Highest Self, bidding us, in scorn of transient consequences, to act as if we belonged not to ourselves, but to a universal system or order, and to render unconditional obedience to the highest law or highest measure of value that we are conscious of.* Somehow I seem to recognize all these features in the ordinary usage in reference to the word "duty."

It could be said that duty with its law plays the same rôle in ourselves that political law ideally should play in the various relationships of human society. The law of the State is intended, I assume, to regulate the activities of men, so that, while each person remains an independent self, the motives of all may nevertheless harmonize in one common ideal purpose or aim. Likewise, duty with its law would regulate all the various impulses, passions, yearnings, and ambitions in one's self so that they should act in harmony toward one ideal result.

We come back to the original question: What is

there in this Sense of Duty, and why are we dominated by it? We dip once more into the human consciousness and search there for an answer.

The old theory of conscience has gone by. We may regret it, but we cannot help it. There may have been a certain beauty in that impression of a guide within ourselves, illumining our pathway and always suggesting to us precisely how to act. It was supposed to provide an immediate answer in all cases of uncertainty.

But a conscience exactly of that kind does not exist. There is nothing in ourselves which always instinctively points to the true course to be taken. This statement may be a disappointment to a great many persons. They have laid so much stress on the value of conscience! But they need not give up any of that stress, although they have misinterpreted what they find in themselves.

The pathway of life is never perfectly illumined. It is not always a clear, plain course. We are obliged to think and brood and ponder, before we choose and decide. The voice of duty is there all the time. There is ever a luminous glow within. But it does not always show us the pathway or explain to us the law.

When for this reason a man shirks his sense of duty; when, as we say, he seeks to "dodge" his own conscience, what he is really defying is more often the testimony of his everyday experience.

In the great majority of instances we know perfectly well what is the true course to pursue. Duty may not explain it to us, but human experience is the guide. When we act in defiance and follow our

caprices, we are simply defying common sense or direct experience. We *know*, from what we have already learned, wherein we are astray.

You may tell me that this interpretation of duty is most unsatisfactory. You would prefer the old theory of a guide always illumining the pathway, and may think that the sense of duty itself is not enough. I for one must answer: It *is* enough. The evil in the world does not come so much from a perplexity over the conflict of duties. Ordinarily most of us know quite well what is right and what we ought to do. There are just two classes of men in the world: those who recognize the authority of duty and those who do not recognize such an authority. It is the calm defiance of all sense of duty, which is responsible for the great mass of iniquity everywhere. Once get a recognition or an acknowledgment of such an authority in the average human consciousness, and our civilization is safe and secure. All the rest will take care of itself.

Common, everyday experience will guide us in the great majority of cases and mark the pathway distinctly enough. The main trouble is that many persons refuse to bend the will or submit to any kind of authority at all. When civilization begins to weaken and decay, this indicates not necessarily a loss of religious belief, not a spread of rationalism, but simply a decline in the regard men pay to the authority of their sense of duty. If men will only come to have the spirit of the soldier standing at his post, I feel that human society is safe and that the race of man will go on advancing. When a man will stay at his post under every kind of fire, through the

conviction that duty has placed him there, he has the character which *makes* civilization.

Go straight to your own consciousness and see what is there. "A luminous guide"? No, but something else. Rather a certain uneasy yearning; a troubled desire or longing; a reaching out beyond yourselves or above yourselves; an unsatisfied, nameless unrest that you cannot defy. You want to be something, do something, get something, realize something. What, or how, or why, — all that at first is vague and uncertain. Only, there is this restless longing for something more, something grander, something deeper, something higher than you have yet realized. Now this I believe shows itself more or less dimly or intensely in every human life. It may be excessively feeble in undeveloped races and lead only to superstition. But something of the kind is there. When we become older, even we who are more civilized or advanced may have forgotten it. We may be obliged to search our memories in order to revive it. But there has been a time when we have had some such experience. For an illustration of what I mean in literature read Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus," or the "Journals" of Amiel.

This, to my mind, is the something which marks us off from all the rest of creation. It is the basis of morality, the starting-point of the sense of duty. Every animate existence does not seem to be influenced by it. We only, as the crown of evolution, are haunted by this vision of a something we have not realized, of a higher self that we have neglected.

Now and then in later life we sometimes awaken to it anew. We go on for years pursuing certain

ends. After awhile we get them. Then with a shock it comes over us that that was not exactly what we wanted, after all. We have been seeking it for years, the something on the outside; and yet it was not our higher nature, not the nameless unrest which was goading us on. And so the old troubled spirit comes back again. We are vexed with haunting regrets over the mistake. If you have had such an experience, you will know what I have in mind as the basis in us of our sense of duty. Read again the poem on "The Buried Life," by Matthew Arnold.

Recognize this nameless unrest, act in true accordance with it, and you will be pursuing the real path of your highest nature. Duty is a voice which speaks for that Nameless Unrest. It wants to keep us in accord with the Grand Order of Things.

You ask, what evidence have we that it is there? I have suggested the answer. The mere fact that the word "duty" ever was coined, is the evidence.

The greatest event of all human history, next to what occurred in Palestine, was the rise of the city of Athens. But the greatest contribution of that city was not its art, its literature, or its political science, but rather its ethical philosophy.

Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were probably the three greatest minds that ever lived. The mystery of all mysteries to me is what first set them to thinking about Virtue and Duty. From that time on, the human intellect has never been able to let the subject alone. It is not of so much importance what they actually taught. The extraordinary circumstance is that they came to consider the matter at all. Human society could have gone on in its

old way, and continued to exist, like the inanimate world. It might have obeyed natural law, and had a share of happiness as well as unhappiness. Why did men ever begin to think about the true course of life?

There is only one answer. There must have been something primordial in the human consciousness itself, lying dormant for untold ages, until the mind had become sufficiently developed to study itself. Then it raised its head and asked: What for? With that step began a new epoch. A change then took place, the influence of which must go on forever.

Religion all by itself, as we have said in another lecture, emphasizes unity. It leads us to repeat over and over again the line of Shelley:

“The One remains, the Many change and pass.”

Ethics, on the other hand, with its sense of duty, fixes our attention on division, struggle, warfare, suggesting the dualistic side of nature. It reminds us of the lines of Clough:

“Thou shalt believe, thou shalt receive,
But thou shalt *do*, O man!”

But Ethical Religion blends both aspects together in the beautiful lines of Emerson:

“To visions profounder
Man’s spirit must dive,
His aye-rolling orb
At no goal will arrive.
The Lethe of Nature
Can’t trance him again,
Whose soul sees the Perfect,
Which his eye seeks in vain.”

In this thought we are above Nature, and yet one with Nature.

Have I made it plain what is meant by the Sense of Duty? I do not know. Each man must judge for himself. But to me it is the supreme fact of existence. It is to me what the word "God" has stood for; it represents to me what the phrase "For Christ's sake" has implied; it means to me what I once attributed to the unconditional authority of the Bible. We do not say that it necessarily does away with those other beliefs, or with that other authority. I only express my personal conviction that it comes first in importance. It stands above them and rests underneath them. Without a sense of duty, men could never have appreciated a character like that of Jesus, or have come to believe in a principle of Justice which they now associate with the name of God. They might have thought of a Power in the Universe, and could have fancied it as personal. But how came they ever to think of a supreme *moral* power? How came they ever to attribute Ideal Justice to the character of the Divine Being? It must have been because of this original sense of duty in the human consciousness.

At the present day, religious beliefs are undergoing a change everywhere. What men used to think, they think no longer. The element of doubt pervades almost everything. The outside world itself seems to some a species of illusion. Natural science has dissolved colour and sound into mere rippling wave movements of air and ether. Philosophy has undermined historic traditions without number. But there is one factor which no philosophy or science

can do away with, and that is this human consciousness of ours. What we see there, we actually touch; it is the first reality. It is not something we have to believe in by inference. We do not have to prove it to ourselves. It is there before us, it is there within us.

Duty I recognize as one of those immediate facts of my consciousness. And so I cling to it; or rather, it stays with me and clings to me, without any effort on my part to hold fast to it. I never doubt it or distrust it. Amid all this world of illusions and appearances, it is to me the one sure reality. I am to obey it implicitly, unswervingly.

With this one fact I rest content. On this principle, I propose to move forward. When you are at a loss what to think; when you doubt and hesitate and ask what there is left to believe in, I answer: Duty survives, untarnished in its glory, undiminished in its authority. This in itself is enough. Though it slay me, yet will I trust in it.

IV

THE ATTITUDE WE SHOULD TAKE TO THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF OTHERS

TRUTH is truth, and there can only be one truth. Yet it is not certain that it would be best at the present time to undertake to bring about a uniform Church or to establish a uniform religion. A great change is manifest among cultivated people. There is a disposition now to smooth out the distinctive features of the creeds, and to want a composite Church. Most of us approve of individuality in personal character. Do we care to foster the same spirit in the domain of religion, or shall we prefer uniformity? Do the distinctions which have been cherished on this subject involve an unnatural bigotry?

I believe in the spirit of individuality, both in personal life and in forms of worship, — meaning by the latter term the way by which men give utterance to the sense of “moving about in worlds not realized,” as explained in a previous lecture. The greatest nation on earth, to my mind, would be the one which should have the largest number of persons, each one of whom had stamped on his face, mind, and soul, qualities peculiar to himself and existing in just that form in no other being in the universe. A widespread uniformity of characteristics would

destroy the possibility of greatness in a race or nation. It is not well that we should all feel alike or all think alike. Some resemblance will come by the very fact of association. It is rather individuality which needs to be cultivated. This applies equally well to the sphere of religion. Probably the grandest outcome would be where there was a variety of methods of worship. The multiplicity of sects and churches would be an indication of strength rather than of weakness, if only the division took place on fundamental issues. The time may come when this will be true of our own country. There may be fewer sects, but each one will be reaching out for those natures to which it is really adapted; each to a degree believing it ought to be in the supremacy, but each never being allowed to transgress on the individuality of the other, or to usurp the secular power in order to strengthen its prestige or authority.

It would be a sublime spectacle if, for example, the Roman Catholic, the Presbyterian, the Anglican, the Unitarian, and the Jewish Churches were to be the few great bodies appealing to the masses of the people for sympathy and approval; each to be kept within bounds by law, winning support exclusively by what it had to offer to the human spirit; at the same time not allowed to accumulate property, nor to seduce the soul of man by external rewards, or social distinctions, or sensational display. The greatest religious age in the world's history would dawn, if such a condition of things should arrive. Each man could then choose as his own nature bade him choose. No one would talk lightly about religion. It would not be the topic of the drawing-room or

of after-dinner speeches, but a theme for consideration in each man's inner consciousness. The tendency under such circumstances would be for most men to belong to a Church, or to have some kind of religion. But under existing circumstances, with the dividing line so sharp on minor distinctions and petty qualifications, the tendency is often to drive the deeper natures away from religion altogether, to starve them out, to leave them outside the pale of any form of Church.

When we speak of a man's religion, it is very often not of his religion at all, in the strict use of language, that we are thinking, but rather of his Church. And so it is important that we draw the distinction between the Church and its doctrines on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the attitude of each individual heart.

Religious belief differs radically in certain respects from nearly all other kinds of belief. It is rather an impression,—one-quarter belief, three-quarters emotion. One small portion comes through thought and reflection; but a very large portion is stamped upon us through a multitude of past influences, associations, and forms of education. No person can quite disentangle the various elements and say just what comes by reflection and what through feeling or past associations. It is this fact which makes it so important that we should have clearly in mind the attitude to be taken toward the beliefs of others. It is not as though we were dealing with views on natural science, not as if we were discussing a problem in social reform or economics. Religious beliefs belong to an entirely different category.

Because of this peculiar circumstance there should be at least one Religious Society or Church in every large community, without any creed or Confession of Faith. Many people who cannot agree in their thinking, yet feel a close fellowship in the spirit, which they cannot themselves define. Then, too, there will always be individuals whose scruples prevent them from subscribing to any statement of beliefs and who nevertheless may be religiously inclined and desirous of acting together for common ethical purposes.

It may be that Emerson's suggestion of an "Ethical Church" would be especially adapted to this class of persons. It is certainly open to doubt whether it is advisable on the part of the "established" churches which have definite creeds, to discourage people from thinking much about them and allowing them to "subscribe" to these creeds even when in a state of doubt. This would put a premium on a careless use of the intellect and actually foster a disregard of scruples of conscience in that very domain to which conscience is supposed to look for stimulus. The only other alternative might be, always to have the creeds *sung* and not recited, treating them not as statements of belief but as collections of inspiring traditions.

The question of tolerance has not been quite mastered by the people of our day, and an immense degree of unfortunate confusion exists in regard to it. There is a tolerance which can be so thin as to have really no substance at all. That is to say, we can tolerate the beliefs of others because we have no longer any interest whatever in religion. We can be

simply indifferent when the subject is brought up. This is about the most exasperating kind of tolerance. A really religious person would sooner meet with downright bigotry. We may have tolerance only within the lines of our own particular religion. We may also be tolerant because we are so anxious to be sympathetic with others and to show the spirit of brotherhood, that we are afraid to have any definite beliefs at all. It all turns on the question: How much of religious belief are we to look upon as due to the accident of a man's nature, or to the indirect influence of past education; and how much comes by pure reflection?

The world is not ripe for a uniform religion or a uniform Church. There is too great a degree of difference in stages of culture and education. Not only that, but there is too wide a divergence of temperament. This fact of temperament probably plays a great *rôle* in developing different forms of belief and differences in Church. At the present time we can clearly see that one form of religion may be better adapted to a certain class of minds, to certain races, or to men in special stages of development; and another to others.

People may have the same degree of education, yet by nature or temperament be adapted to one form of Church rather than another. We are almost forced, in spite of ourselves, to think of "race religions" and "race churches." We ought to do it with respect, just as we should pay a deep respect to other personal qualities that come as race characteristics. Each man is entitled to his own individuality, provided he is not aggressive with

it, and does not want to stamp it on every other individual.

The problem before us involves as one of its phases the whole subject of what is called the "Supernatural." One may wish to be in conscious relationship with the higher or supersensible order of existence. Human nature is bound to follow out its own predilections in this matter. There are persons who wish to have that relationship very definite. It is possible that even superior natures should crave the more concrete aspect, and desire a vivid realism in this regard. They may feel that they would lose that sense of belonging to another superior order, if the fact were not kept before their attention by a multitude of outward symbols. They want a clear, accurate comprehension of that supersensible world. This craving may find its satisfaction in the elaborate services of the Church. Where a man really demands that concrete form, it were better, perhaps, that he should have it. There are all stages of worship; and I believe we should recognize a justification for the differences, and let human nature have free play.

For my part, I would rather not have the realistic aspect. In my own experience, I have found that when the sense of belonging to a higher world is forced upon me in too concrete a form; when there is an exaggerated realism about it; when it presents itself in elaborate forms and ceremonies, then it loses its force upon me; I feel myself less, rather than more, in a "religious mood." The forms of the Church do not help me much in that respect. I prefer a stern, severe simplicity. I would rather seek my opportunity for worship in the silence of

the evening, out under the open sky, or in the quiet moods of thought, when alone with my books. But that is my peculiar nature. It would be irrational, almost bigotry, on my part, to demand that others should seek it in the same way.

There are some persons who cannot attend the religious services of a Presbyterian or Catholic Church without an extreme sense of discomfort. It exasperates them beyond measure to sit and listen to what they think is so "irrational." They want to change it all, and make it over again. It leads them to feel as if they would like to destroy the whole historic structure. As they sit there, listening to what is said, or to the music that is rendered, they feel as if the world had gone backward, and had returned to the age of superstition. They cannot conceive how cultivated, thoughtful, honest minds can think in this way, or draw help and inspiration from such a service. It seems to these persons one colossal example of credulity, and makes them almost lose faith in human nature. In order to keep their confidence in the possible future triumph of the rational part of man, they are almost compelled to absent themselves from the services of the Church.

Yet for one, I can attend the "services" of the Roman Catholic Church, and feel myself in an attitude of reverence. One can dissociate it entirely, or almost entirely, from the persons who may be officiating at the altar. They do not own that religion, nor that Church. As we listen to the music, we lose all sight and thought of them. They stand there as mere figures, not human characters. The "priesthood" do not mean persons to me; they

are like symbols, a part of the architecture and the stained glass of the edifice where they are officiating, and the decorations of the altar before which they stand. The priests blend with the music, with the processions, with the lights and the shadows, the colours of the glass in the windows, the prayers and the aspirations, — they all fuse into one. They are to that extent an incarnate idea. They express the effort of the human soul in past ages to secure help and enlightenment in the midst of the sublime and mysterious struggle against evil.

We listen to the oratorios of Handel and Haydn ; we enjoy the wonderful music ; we are eager to hear the symphonies of Beethoven, or a "Requiem" of Mozart. Yet these symphonies, that "Requiem," or those oratorios, would never have existed but for the religious aspirations of preceding ages, — nay, but for the existence of the historic Church of Christendom. The services of the Church are, in their way, a magnificent symphony. They tell the story of suffering mankind, the struggle of the race to shake off the effects of evil, and rise triumphant above calamity. In the same way, while to some the story of the life and death of Jesus may be an historic fact, to others it is an idea, a poem ; Jesus is humanity, and we are, to a degree, drinking of the cup of his Passion, suffering for the sins of others, bearing on our shoulders the penalty of the wrongs of bygone races. It is always the same story ; the tale of struggle is always there, — the picture of mankind suffering and struggling, seeking to rise triumphant from the load of evil ever dragging it down.

Why should a man be troubled about the "credu-

lity" or "superstition"? He does not have to believe it all. It is not a question whether he should *belong* to a Church. When listening to the glorious music of Haydn and Handel, it does not cross his mind that in doing so he is surrendering to the influence of credulity and superstition.

It is a singular fact that people can often be so enthusiastic over styles of architecture, and yet seem to have so little appreciation of the depth and beauty of the religious spirit which called that architecture into existence. The Gothic Cathedral is certainly not a mere study in beautiful lines and forms. It is the visible expression of a religious idea, as much so as was the Parthenon of Athens. Unless we can appreciate that idea, and enter into the moods of the people who held it, we cannot truly appreciate the architecture. We have to remember that men and women with hearts like ourselves have developed these religions. The first essential is to enter into their moods, instead of assuming that we alone have worked out our special religion by a process of thought, and that others are guided in such matters only by feeling.

It is hard to realize how much we are all determined in our views on this matter by the accident of circumstances. Probably the most philosophical among us would have had a different standpoint if he had grown up in another country, or under other conditions. Even in the new direction we take when revolting from earlier beliefs, we shall be influenced by circumstances. The character of the reaction will be determined by what we are reacting *from*. And yet all the time many assume that with them it has

been wholly an intellectual process, and that peculiarities of feeling and temperament have not influenced their views on such matters at all. There is no domain where men are so liable to fall into an irrational sense of superiority as in religion.

I have pretty much lost faith in ever attempting to influence men on religious subjects by a process of argument. As a rule, it is only the convictions which have been acquired by a process of thinking which can be *changed* by a process of thinking. But the accident of circumstances has so much more to do in determining both what we believe and what we *disbelieve* on such questions! The negative method of attack seldom does any good. People *outgrow* their errors in religion through a long series of influences, if they ever change at all.

It is probably most difficult of all for men to take a truly sympathetic attitude toward a faith they have once held and then partially given up. They may find it especially hard to have a true appreciation for the very religion that is nearest home. They may talk of its "credulity and superstition." These features are before them all the time, and it requires great effort to see the spirit underneath. I fancy it is for this reason that there is so much of a tendency nowadays to coquet with Buddhism or other Oriental religions. Men forget that there may be just as much, if not more, that is irrational or superstitious there. But those aspects in the latter instance are not thrust upon their attention by all the surroundings of their life. Hence it is that they are more susceptible to what is remote.

To appreciate a religious faith does not necessarily

imply that we share its belief. But it would imply that we see that faith as having developed naturally out of aspirations in the human heart, and not as an artificial creation which could simply be argued out of existence. It means that we recognize the worth of the sentiments from which that faith has sprung and which have led people to adopt it, although we cannot adopt it ourselves.

The greatest changes which occur in our religion are those which take place when we are quite unconscious of what is going on. We do not know just when we begin to believe or disbelieve. We can seldom or never trace the steps of the transition. Discussion on such matters often serves to intensify both sides in their previous attitude, especially if they have felt deeply about it. The best way to make a religious faith strong in another, or to kindle new life and enthusiasm for it among its followers, is to attack it vigorously. There is only one way to influence and change the faith of others, and that is by quietly presenting a living example in one's self of something which is better.

It is the man with the most fixed, deep, assured convictions, who can be the most broad and sympathetic toward the religious impressions and beliefs of others. We may be convinced that we have something better, or the best, and for that reason we can be all the more broad and tolerant. I believe in the cause I am engaged in, the Religion of Ethics, just as the devout Catholic believes in Roman Catholicism. It is for this reason that I can at times attend the services of a Presbyterian or Catholic Church in a sympathetic attitude. There is no anxiety or dread

on my part lest I may be influenced one way or the other.

Why not just as readily draw an inspiring thought from a book of Catholic devotion if you can, as from a volume of Plato? Why not stand just as ready to have a Presbyterian Catechism in one's pocket, if there is something to be learned from it, as to have there the "Story of the Light of Asia"? We want what is true from every source. We are the heirs of all the ages and inherit the Psalms of David as much as the Dramas of Sophocles. We have received by bequest the "Confessions" of St. Augustine as much as the "Treatises" of Cicero. The writers of those works were all seekers after the light. They had their weak points, their elements of superstition. But they each unfolded certain grand truths. It is the truth we are looking for, and we can ignore their superstitions. The time may come when we can think of religious beliefs as a kind of special garment for each individual. We shall let each man pursue his own course, follow his own nature, choose his own Church; and that will develop the highest form of individuality.

For ages to come there may be Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Unitarians, just as to the end of time there will always be the "Epicurean" and the "Stoic." The names themselves may pass away; as to that we cannot prophesy;—possibly it is better that they should sink into oblivion. But the distinctions do not pertain exclusively to the names; they start in human nature itself. A man will be a Roman Catholic by instinct; just as another may be, in the same way, a Methodist, Unitarian, or

Presbyterian, provided he has any religious instinct at all.

Humanity was not led to religion by a process of logic, but through its experience. The human race had the experience first, and the thought came afterward.

Yes, cling with all your might and main to your religious distinctions, your personal preferences, your heart yearnings, if they spring out of the deepest and most fundamental elements of your nature. No matter whether other people smile at them; never mind if others look upon you in an attitude of calm intellectual superiority! There is something higher, grander, and nobler than intellect. The very brute can think and has mind; but the religious instinct belongs supremely to humanity, — although some persons may be without it, because, to use Amiel's phrase, they are just "candidates for humanity" and nothing more.

We want to draw near to the man of religious nature, whatever his race, whatever his clime, whatever his nationality. If we recognize in him a yearning for higher life, an instinctive reverence for that which is essentially superior, then we want to come closer to him. His God may not be my God, his Bible may not be my Bible, his prayer may not be my prayer. His God will be his intellectual symbol for the all-pervading Power in the Universe. I may see the universe in a different light and so have a different God. What of that, provided we are both faithfully *trying* to get at the real God?

I do not propose to relinquish my ethical faith, any more than you may propose to relinquish your

religious faith as Catholic, Jew, or Presbyterian. Your intellectual symbol may be of one kind, mine may be of another. I may put one fact as supreme, overtopping all other facts; you may place some other fact in that exalted position. What is supreme to a man, that is his religion; and I am not prepared to ask any other man to alter the craving by which he has chosen some one star to be, as it were, the crowning height of all his aspirations. But the very circumstance that he places one fact as supreme and I place another, should not interfere with our somehow coming together.

Religion may have a great variety of doctrines, a multitude of gods, an endless array of institutions. But, in spite of this multiplicity, it has grown out of one solemn fact or experience of humanity; it springs out of our suffering and our sorrow, out of our sin and our shame. It is the sin-stricken, sorrow-laden humanity which yearns unceasingly after a clue for its own redemption. Joy does not draw men together; more often it holds them apart. But it is in the anguish of our sin-stricken, sorrow-laden souls that we reach out almost helplessly for the hand of our fellows, reach out for anything whatever that may lift us away from this awful burden bearing us down. It is because men have suffered and agonized that they have been drawn together, that they are fond of brotherhoods, that they have developed religions. You tell me there is nothing in common for the Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Unitarian, and the Jew, the agnostic and the atheist, the Buddhist and the disciple of Confucius? I say to you, look into one another's faces; see one another's features; wit-

ness the care, the anxiety, the lines of suffering and pain written therein. Is there a human being living in this wide universe who does not carry those scars, who has not felt the torture of conscience, the anguish of sorrow, the blow of defeated aims?

It is there that I see the basis for union. It is sorrow and pain which draw men together. Shall we not compare our experiences one with another? Shall we not reach out for any light that may have fallen on another man's pathway? Shall we not be eager to reap the wisdom others may have gained in this awful struggle with sin, wretchedness, and calamity? As we think of this long, long story, as we recall all the unhappiness the human race has endured, we cease to care, after all, to talk ourselves; an overwhelming desire comes over us to listen to others. I want to go from one end of the world to the other, asking men what they may have discovered; begging them to give me of their experience, to tell me of any light which may have illumined their pathway.

But it must not be forgotten that religion is one thing; to be religious, another. There has never been a time in past history when the civilized world was so much given to talking about religion as to-day; but there has never been an age in the past that was more essentially irreligious. Theory and practice may have been in harmony at other epochs, but they are painfully out of accord in this century, and most of all in America. We like to speculate about the subject, to delve into its metaphysics, to compare its aspects among different races, to trace its origin in the prehistoric human heart. It is the popular theme

of the day. The sects and theories multiply. The literature of the subject is something enormous. No person can keep up with it. When, however, religion once becomes a "fad," it is menaced with extinction.

What we have to contend with is not "belief" or "unbelief," but the lack of deep interest in the more ideal aspects of life. The most aggressive bigotry may be preferable to the suave complacency with which many persons can worship physical comfort and *play* at being religious. A person can develop out of the former attitude by the very depth of his sincerity. But only a terrific shock from the outside can make the other type of man treat the subject seriously. People like to dally with religion as they do with art. They call it being "broad" and "seeing all sides," when in reality they do not see any side of the subject at all.

The one thing we seem to care the least about is to make our religion a part of our life. What we appear most to care for is rather the pleasure of talking and speculating about it. As we look out into the world, often it does not seem to make much difference in the character of a man what he believes. If we examine his external life, would it give us any clue to his religion? If we knew his religion, would it give us any clue to his outward life? Men are tending to wear their religion at the present day as a kind of garment which they can put on or off at their pleasure. There may be some to whom this situation appears as a matter for satisfaction and rejoicing, but to me it is a matter for gloom and despondency.

There is a danger threatening our civilization. We are trifling with tremendously serious things. There is something almost tragic in the peculiar speculative interest the public now takes in reform movements, social ideals, and religious aspirations. People are so eager to know something about them, and are ashamed if they cannot talk of them with others. They are anxious to keep up with every new theory. A kind of "intellectual sentimentalism" is characteristic of the day. A cry of suffering and agony goes up from human hearts, a passionate yearning for some higher form of personal life, or social ideal, or religious faith; and we discuss it on the street, and talk about it as though it were some new and strange invention, or some daring or diverting flash of poetic or philosophic genius. Poor struggling human nature lifts its cry in the darkness after new light and new life; and we analyze it, and study it, and philosophize about it,—do everything, in fact, but share the feeling ourselves. But until we do come to have that feeling in our own hearts and not let it be a mere speculative theory, we shall never have any religious life, and we shall certainly never develop a new religion.

We should put aside this intellectual sentimentalism, and have a religion of the whole being. What a man believes ought to influence his life; else he has no religion. It should shape the whole trend of his existence. It should mark the very lineaments of his face and the still deeper lineaments of his soul. I see no use in a mere speculative faith that cannot become a part of a man's life. It is worse than useless. The enthusiasm for unity and brotherhood, which characterizes our day, will mean nothing unless

it calls forth a unity and brotherhood to *some definite purpose*; otherwise it will sink into an old-time religious emotionalism. I see no purpose in religious organization unless it can alter and refine the very foundations of human society. The Sunday attitude of worship, joined with the week-day attitude of "do as you please," must inevitably undermine the spiritual side of life.

It may be that the civilized world at the present time is going through the birth-throes of a new religion; but if it comes, it will be because the human heart everywhere is yearning for it. We shall never get it just by talking about it. It will not come mainly from those who write the books and preach the sermons, but rather from those who suffer and struggle. If there is ever a true "reunion of Christendom," it will occur not by each sect surrendering a part of its individuality, but by one Sect or Church showing itself superior to all others, so that it will survive as the "fittest," while the others die away or are merged into the one which has been triumphant.

What is required is a new *Idealism*, which shall lift men above their care about getting on in the world, or getting ahead of one another, or turning one man's loss to another man's gain. We cry, "religion is *one!*" and then build our social institutions on a principle which inevitably tends to rend humanity into shreds. What does that unity of religion amount to, if it is not going to bring about the unity of mankind?

The movement which ultimately is destined to survive will not be the one which simply offers a

new scheme of philosophy, but rather the one which is capable of giving more peace to the human heart, more depth to the human soul, more strength to the human will, more justice to the foundations of human society.

Our need is not for consolation, but for new sources of strength. The human will wants something to lean upon. Hence the real purpose of an ethical movement. Its aim is not to find a new philosophy, but rather to teach and inspire men to be religious in that higher sense in which religious effort means the yearning of the soul of man to realize in personal life and in social institutions the divine element already existing as an ideal in the human heart.

It has been a great evil in past history that people have tended so often to give themselves over to the luxury of religious emotions, and let the welfare of humanity take care of itself. What wonder that men sometimes should have felt glad of the possible extinction of all religion! It is an appalling mistake. Religion is not an emotion, but a kind of life. Human selfishness may at times have made it otherwise; but a higher power in the heart of man himself has been struggling and battling against that selfishness. We can already see the indications of a new epoch. By and by theory will again harmonize with practice. If that other aspiration wins supremacy, if men come to care for these other ideals, the true religion will come of itself; it will appear as the natural bloom on the tree, whose seed was in the heart of man. Then, as the prophet said, "Justice shall run down as the waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

V

HOW PEOPLE OF MANY MINDS CAN USE THE WORD "GOD"

IT is a word that I very rarely use — not, however, because it means so little to me, but because it means so much.

To what extent can we conscientiously avail ourselves of a name which stands for such a great variety of contrary, if not contradictory, ideas among those who employ it? We have already said that it was not absolutely essential to ethical purpose or to the ethical life; that, in fact, a man could have an adequate motive for aspiring to lead a perfect and complete life, even if quite destitute of the beliefs ordinarily connected with that Name. Then, too, we are aware that no two thoughtful persons will quite mean the same thing by the word; while those who think a great deal and those who think little, or none at all, will connect it with radically opposite standpoints. If we use it, we shall certainly be misinterpreted by many. They will have one image or one set of ideas in their minds; we shall have another. We may often stultify ourselves by using the term, and mislead those to whom we are speaking, because they will be viewing it in some other sense.

The philosopher's God will be a very different

being from the God of the childlike, uncultivated mind. Who can forget that scene between Gretchen and Faust, and those immortal lines, "Who dare name Him, who confess I believe Him?" in which, half in the form of soliloquy, Goethe brings together some of the profoundest thoughts about deity as they have developed from Plato down to Spinoza. Philosophy and poetry are united, in this utterance of one of the deepest, greatest minds of any age or any country.

But then comes the extraordinary answer of sweet Gretchen: "That is just about what my pastor tells us on Sundays." Alas! we know only too well that such a statement could not have been altogether true. Gretchen's God was not the God of Goethe, although in both instances the *name* might be alike. And yet I ask myself: Was there an impassable chasm between the two conceptions? Or was it only a difference of degree? Could the Being in Gretchen's mind become expanded into the Being in the mind of Goethe?

People will always disagree on this point; some will say that the contrast was only one of degree, while others will claim that the two conceptions would have been utterly contradictory. I do not know that this dispute will ever be settled. But be that as it may, it makes us hesitate lest we play carelessly with what is deepest and most sacred in human life. It is our sense of reverence for the truly divine everywhere which leads us to pause at the moment when we are about to use the name of God. What if we should degrade it, and at the same time degrade our own natures, by tossing it heed-

lessly about, until the Being around which has centred the grandest and noblest conceptions of mankind comes to stand for commonplace, meaningless, effusive sentiment? Is it strange that we do not want to speak that name, that we try every method of avoiding the use of it, and constantly endeavour to find a substitute for it, lest we tarnish its solemn and lofty character? It will be often the most deeply and devotedly religious men who display this shrinking hesitancy.

And yet if we take this attitude, refusing to employ the name at all, we shall separate ourselves completely from many persons with whom we may be in close bonds of sympathy. The reluctance on our part will often put us in the position of seeming to antagonize or deny something which we revere as well as they. This misunderstanding will keep persons apart who would naturally be drawn closely together.

Yet I believe in being excessively scrupulous about the use and the abuse of terms which have been identified with what is most precious and sacred. The ethical enthusiast has the cause of religion itself to uphold and sustain in its higher form. It should be his aim to preserve from misuse some of those sacred names which are losing their old-time lofty dignity, because of the way men have of treating them as household companions. In speaking of "God," I am afraid, myself, of committing sacrilege.

But there are times when it would seem as if we could not escape from using this name. No substitute will quite answer. We are aware of moods when the mind reaches in sympathy outward or backward

to the best thinking and noblest aspiration of all ages, and there comes sifted out from all the groping and yearning a Something which finds vent only in saying "God." These intervals will be comparatively rare. We shall not find it necessary constantly to employ this name. We shall rather think of it as a heritage we have received in trust, to be handed down from us to others with ever purer lustre and with an ever deeper import.

The calm assurance with which many people pass judgment on the most perplexing questions, is positively amazing. But this weakness lasts only for a little while. Then comes the second stage, which I should term "reverent hesitation." The most thoughtful men do not wish to go beyond what they can clearly see; while on the other hand they do not wish rashly to leave the old pathway unless driven to it by an irresistible logic.

We can see this experience strikingly illustrated in the modern attitude toward the problem of God. I have been peculiarly impressed with the effort on the part of some of the deepest and most earnest minds to find a new or different name for that Being, — a name which should not put them in the position of complete separation from the past, and yet which should not express more than they can honestly commit themselves to. Men speak, for example, nowadays of the "Infinite Power," the "Supreme Being," the "Absolute," the "Ultimate Source," the "Great Lawgiver." We recall the "Invisible Companion" referred to by William Kingdon Clifford, who was called agnostic or atheist; the "Substance Unique with many names" which Renan fancied he had dis-

covered in Æschylus, but which he really discovered in the thinking of his own century; the "Father of all, in every age and every clime adored," in the writings of Alexander Pope; the "All-enfolding and the All-preserving" of Goethe; the "Substance" of Spinoza; or the "Eternal, not ourselves, which makes for Righteousness," described by Matthew Arnold.

What are these but so many different ways of manifesting that "reverent hesitation"? What are they but so many efforts to speak of "God" without pronouncing the word, and by that means to preserve all that is valuable or lasting in the idea, while separating it from all that is crude or obsolete? Men are afraid lest they should say too much by the name they use, and through that mistake should destroy its significance altogether. Those who have very positive beliefs on this subject, and those whose beliefs are vague and cautious, will perhaps be inclined to agree that there is truth in the assertion of Shelley, when in speaking of theism he says, "Where indefiniteness ceases, there superstition begins." We should none of us, perhaps, quite like to rest our beliefs on indefinite sentiment. Yet we are well aware that one step too far in our definite assurance about deity may land us in superstition.

Those who undertake to sift out the impressions connected with the word, and get a residuum with which they can afterwards associate this name, would none of them probably unite on the same set of ideas. Each man is thus in a way obliged to formulate his own God. In all reverence for the solemn task, I wish to make an effort of this kind and gather

together the impressions or ideas which strike me personally as liable always to be identified with the thoughts about this Being. If each person were to do this after years of thinking, he would at least partially save himself from confusion, or from being misjudged by others, when employing the term. All the while we shall not lose sight of the fact that we are dealing with the most difficult of all the problems confronting the human mind. I can only state my personal convictions—nothing more.

Whenever I think of this name, it always comes before me in one of three aspects. They are not the aspects which would have been clear to me in childhood; nor are they quite what came before the human mind in the childhood of the race. They are mental or spiritual conceptions which can only arise when men begin to think or to have philosophical ideas. And yet the dawn of these conceptions may be discovered in the dim, vague feelings which preceded the age of thinking. It is because we cannot absolutely disconnect them from those earlier sentiments, because we can recognize no absolute break in the slow process of spiritual evolution from sentiment to idea and from idea to systematic thought, that now and then we are impelled to use that Name which stood for those earlier theistic feelings at the time of their incipency. A new name would be too new and break the continuity, although the old one has *too much* history associated with it.

The first of these aspects is what I should call the sheer mystery of being. It is not the process of development or evolution itself which overwhelms

me with its mysterious grandeur, but the bare fact that anything exists at all. I look down at the paving stones under my feet, and ask myself how came they into being, what holds them there,—not what they are made of, not the changes in shape or locality which their substance has undergone, not the conditions by which their chemical structure is explained, not what they are as contrasted with something else, but just the fact that they *are*! There is something so baffling and awe-inspiring in the simple fact of their existence, that when thinking about it I feel everything slipping away from me as I sink deeper and deeper and lose myself and all my thinking in this one bewildering circumstance. It gives me a feeling akin to fear, and yet allied to the sublime.

We have no sense of the strange or the mysterious in the thought of nothingness. But the step from nothing to something utterly dazes the mind. There is no use in looking down upon these paving-stones and fancying another substance underneath them, a more delicate material of which they are composed. You may pass from crude earth to the invisible atom, and from the atom to the still more invisible ether. The process may go on indefinitely, but it will take you no nearer to the origin of being itself. We can only say, this thing *is*, and get no further. As a man speculates about it, he reaches out as it were for something final to take hold of, grasp at, cling to, or rest upon.

There are some persons who do not feel the sense of mystery in nature until they come upon organic life. Matter itself, the substance we see or touch, has for them nothing strange or solemn about it.

They simply take it as a commonplace fact. But in the presence of the living cell they are in the attitude of awe. Others feel it only when thinking of what is spiritual, in speculating upon the subjective life or the self-conscious soul. But the living soul or the living cells are mere phases of the one supreme mystery, — the fact of being or existence itself. The grandeur, the solemnity, the majesty of it all, is just as much in the atom or the wave motion of the ether as in this subjective life of ours.

We cannot get beyond this mystery or away from it or outside of it. This aspect of deity is probably the one which first awakened in the dawning consciousness of man. It is more closely allied to the primitive prehistoric sentiment than any of the other aspects. We are not thinking at first of a Creator who brought all that exists into being, for we should then be baffled with the greater mystery of the being of that Creator. It is just simply the fact that something exists, which impresses us with such a sense of supreme solemnity. We want a name for the mystery. We may try in many ways to describe it, to give a meaning to it. But description is bare. The fact of mystery in its loftiest and most dignified sense will always have a place in the human consciousness. We may nourish the thought of it until the mind weakens and loses itself in vague sentimentalism, or we may clothe it with human imagery until the element of loftiness quite disappears. But the fact is there, nevertheless. The mind of man in some of its most supreme and exalted moments faces this mystery of being or existence, and at such times wants a name for it. Then, possibly

with reluctance or dread, in fear of committing sacrilege in reference to what is deepest and most sacred, one will speak of it as "God."

The second aspect associated with this name is of a more intellectual character. It is the one which mind as mind most cares for and is impressed with; for it is the outgrowth, not of sentiment, but of pure philosophy. Attention was called to it more than two thousand years ago in Athens and perhaps more than three thousand years ago in India, but not until our own century has it come to have a definite significance. In earlier ages it was waiting for the birth of Sir Isaac Newton, and then later on for the coming of Charles Darwin.

The point I have in mind is what is termed the unity of nature, the kinship between everything existing throughout the universe. It is inspiring to realize that we could not be alone anywhere; that there is no point in the infinite expanse of space where we should not be in contact with something like ourselves; that at no moment of time in the most distant past or in the remotest future should we find ourselves absolutely isolated beings, unallied to all other existence. Newton with his law of gravity, and Darwin with his explanation of the evolution of organic life, has given us a sense of pervading unity such as we can as yet only partly appreciate. The solitariness of individual existence is thus taken away, and awe is kindled within us as we think of this fact of universal kinship.

I do not see how any one can ever look at the skies in the splendour of evening without thinking of the fact which we now know beyond dispute, that the

substance there, the very atoms of the stars are like the atoms of the earth we stand upon, that the chemical constituents are much the same there as here, that the quantity of matter throughout the universe is unchanged and unchanging. Or if we single out one of those glittering lights in the heavens, shall we not at once begin to fancy that it, too, may be a sun with planets like our own moving around it, that every one of those stars may be the centre of an evolving planetary system where organic life may appear, and where the great struggle for justice may begin, as self-conscious beings arise.

No human being can ever become so completely self-concentrated as not to be in awe at the sense of this unity. Even the most intellectual man need not feel ashamed in giving way to an attitude of reverence, when dwelling upon this sublime fact which has been so fully established. Can you take up a handful of earth without thinking of its history, of the connection between that crude substance and the distant sun from whence it originally came? You watch the expressions on a human face, and then trace their genesis far back, thousands and thousands of years, to the earliest life of mankind. Even the origin of our thinking, our philosophy, our grandest conceptions, can be traced back step by step over the centuries, until we realize that we should not have these thoughts to-day if it were not for the thinking of other men two or three thousand years ago. This sublime kinship, by which we recognize unity of substance and relationship in development everywhere, thrills us and possesses us in a way that no language can express.

Every new step in physical science is but one further chapter unfolding this sublime unity. The writings of such men as Huxley and Tyndall, Darwin or Helmholtz, Lyell or von Humboldt, affect me like "devotional literature." The Story of Nature should be of itself a Bible. We should read it and study it with religious feeling, because it is but the story of one theme endlessly illustrating this sublime Unity.

What name shall we give to it? How shall we voice the sentiment kindled within us when thinking about it? Is there one phrase by which we can express ourselves without sacrilege? We want something which will speak for the fact of this unity, a focus or centre for it, a one something which shall give vent to our emotion, and then "let the rest be silence." At rare intervals I believe that the student of philosophy or the man of science in thinking of this unity will wait for an instant, and then whisper, "God."

But the most important belief associated with this name is not connected with the element of mystery, nor with the fact of a pervading unity or a universal kinship. Rather, in seeming contradiction with this idea of an absolute unity we fancy somehow that the nature of things "takes sides," as it were, in the struggle going on within itself,—not, however, in reference to every form of conflict, but in the great battle between good and evil. No matter how unphilosophical this may appear, the human mind is strangely prepossessed with the conviction that, even if nature or the "cosmic process" is indifferent, there is a process of the process, or nature of *things*, on

the side of those who devote themselves to the ideally Good. This comes nearer to being an instinctive belief than any of the deeper "prepossessions" which have dominated the consciousness of man. We are led to assume that when we sacrifice our personal or transient interests in the cause of Duty, there is something in the universe or behind it which is aiding us and standing by us, that we are fighting in the cause of some fundamental principle in the universe. A few of us may cling to this impression all the more if the majority of mankind at the present moment seem indifferent to such efforts in the cause of Duty.

This attitude may strike the mind as illogical or contradictory. But when you have proven to a man that he is not rational in such a belief, the belief will stay just the same. He will go on acting as if it were true. A conviction of this kind seems almost ineradicable. The new science and new philosophy have had little effect upon it. They have shattered innumerable beliefs, torn away the veil from many a mystery, reduced a multitude of our prepossessions to fanciful illusions. Yet they have not shaken humanity's faith that there is a "stream of tendency" in the nature of things working in the interest of righteousness. The man who dies for a cause is satisfied that his effort cannot be altogether unavailing, inasmuch as he thinks it will be taken up and carried forward by such a stream of tendency.

On this issue we shall be in sympathetic touch with the prophetic spirit of ancient times. It was a sentiment at first, long before it was understood as an idea; and perhaps it will never be clearly

explained or explainable. Socrates believed it and acted upon it; the Hebrew prophets taught it; the Stoic was sustained by it; St. Paul voiced it in the cry, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" It has culminated in the noble belief of the nineteenth century that "one with the right on his side is always in the majority."

The grandest feature of morality is conveyed in this faith on our part that in surrendering ourselves to its cause we are not simply fighting our own battle, but that a larger something than our individual selves is involved. The martyr, giving up his life in some such supreme Cause, must have ecstatic moments of religious communion such as the ordinary mortal may scarcely dream of.

It is not until a man enters upon the fight that he comes to have this faith. The more grovelling natures know nothing about it. We do not meet with it in history until the ethical energy begins consciously to be put forth. Then it appears in startling vividness. Prophet, priest, and king give evidence of it. At first it may come in the cruder form, with a belief that the universe or the nature of things or a divine providence is directly taking *our* side in the conflict. Later on the grander thought awakens within us, that *we* are taking sides with the divine providence or the nature of things.

It is needless to add that I have at this point touched upon the aspect of the subject which will most appeal to the Ethical Teacher. The dreamer may linger over the mystery of being, or over the pervading unity everywhere, and in exalted moments may revel in "God-intoxication" as he writes his

"Adonais." But the man who yearns over the welfare of his fellows, who sees dimly in the distance a vision of the possible Perfect Life which he would like to realize in himself and see realized in humanity, the man who cannot sit still and lose himself in the beauty of sentiment so long as he can do anything at all to uplift a sin-stricken, sorrow-laden mankind, — such a man will care more for this other aspect of deity, in so far as he cares about deity at all.

Again we are brought back to the query, What name shall we give to it? Shall we do as other people do, — shall we speak at random, and talk of it freely as "God"? We may like to do this; and yet we should hesitate. We know how quickly others will materialize the impression and think at once of the hand of a deity interfering in the conflicts of life, just as the gods in the stories of Homer entered here and there in the battles, and took sides with their favourite heroes. If we allow such ideas to prevail, then we shall show ourselves unworthy of this sacred trust committed to our care. If only men would come to have a deeper appreciation of this other aspect of deity and to think that they have to fight in the cause of a supreme principle in the universe, and not merely that the universe or its author is fighting in *their* cause, then there would be less danger of this crude materialistic view. Yet in spite of this danger, at exceedingly rare intervals, when watching the trend of history or when called upon to make some supreme effort on the side of justice, in reverent enthusiasm we shall perhaps say the word, and speak of this tendency in the nature of things as "God."

These are the three ideas which, as I see it, will always be identified with this Name. As to what are the other attributes of this "Supreme Unity" which "makes for righteousness" and which stands for the "Central Mystery of all Being," there will always be dispute. Some will personify it and speak of "Him," clothing that power with feelings of sentiment and loving care. They will fancy the sheltering arms of a Personal Father reaching out to them from the skies. This would be "Gretchen's God."

Others will hesitate to go so far, because of their sense of the responsibility for the trust received by them as a heritage and committed to their charge. They will fear to mar its import by clothing it with human attributes.

These contrasts will always exist, for they represent just so many different stages of culture. To some there will always be a Personal Supreme Being; and for others an Impersonal Power making for Righteousness. The child's conception of God would be a sacrilege to a mind like that of Spinoza or Goethe.

On such matters each man must judge and choose for himself. This privilege is vitally essential, if we care to preserve and develop the noblest and purest thoughts about deity. A man's personal nature, the tendencies of his life, the Cause to which he devotes himself, will determine what aspect will have the most influence upon him and be most constantly before his attention. My interest and enthusiasm is not for physical science, not for art by itself, not for æsthetic sentiment, but supremely for the cause of

the Ethical Ideal. And so at those exceptional and rare moments when, reluctantly, as if in spite of myself, I speak of "God," I am thinking of the connection of the nature of things with the cause of Justice or Righteousness. I go no further, but am content to wait and leave the rest of the problem for future ages to solve.

An attitude of utter or absolute ignorance about deity I cannot take. It strikes me as meaningless to consider everything that we are dealing with as "appearances," and the *beyond* as the "reality." If there is *one* universe or *one* Being, then all that we deal with, *our* world, is a part of that Being, or to some extent is representative of it. And thus "we know in part," and what we know is true knowledge as far as it goes.

Is it essential that one should believe in these three aspects of deity, be deeply concerned about them, in order not to lose faith in the ethical cause or not to lack enthusiasm for the Perfect Life? We have answered, no. Even the most important of these aspects may be wanting in one's faith, without shaking one's devotion to the Good. The faith or conviction that the nature of things is on the side of Right comes of itself. There is no use in arguing the point or trying to prove it. Tell a man to enter the battle and see for himself. The "looker-on" does not have *faith*; he only has theories. He wants to know the how and the why, to be the especial confidant of the "Infinite Father." Those who are in the struggle think less of this. They will not lack for inspiration, however embarrassed they may be over the problems of theology.

We shall only degrade the whole subject by dealing with theistic beliefs as a useful means for encouraging good behaviour. There is something utterly repugnant to the finer moral sense in the famous saying of Voltaire: "If there were no God, it would be necessary to invent one," — meaning, as I understand him, that such a belief is necessary to the preservation of "social order." Every argument for the existence of a deity from that standpoint will only be repellent to people of high character, while leading others to glaring, defiant atheism. No man can reverence a Power of which he is simply afraid, because of the penalties which such a Being can execute upon him. An "expediency" God means no God at all for any except the most inferior or most decrepit natures. Only a decaying civilization, which has lost its virility and is reaching out for any straw to save itself from utter collapse, will stoop so low as to drag down the grand conceptions associated with the idea of deity, by desiring to make such a Being a substitute for a police force. If there is not something implanted in human nature which can develop an inner strength and of itself furnish a motive for high conduct, then our civilization is doomed. For the sake of what has been sacred in the thoughts about a God, I plead that we avoid taking such an attitude. If we cultivate the belief in a deity because we *need* such a Being, for reasons of practical expediency, then in the higher sense we have surrendered manhood and Godhead alike.

The ethical importance of the problem comes from the demand that we should be true and clear in our thinking on the matter, and be cautious lest we com-

mit the sacrilege of injuring the deepest and most precious qualities of the human soul by associating unworthy impressions with this sacred Name. The fact that it has been identified for so long a time with ethical aspiration, has interwoven it with the finer human sentiments in such a way that to lower the one may injure the other. We may be justified in reverent hesitation about what to think of this Being ; but if we do have positive beliefs, they should be as pure and true and high as we can attain to or comprehend.

This will explain why nowadays the tendency exists to think of the Supreme Being as impersonal. For my own part I am more inclined to speak of the "Power" than to speak of "Him." A sense of reverence, and not a mere unbelief or negative Agnosticism, is what controls me there. A constant dread exists within me, lest by careless use of language I should reduce to unworthy dimensions my vision of the very Being I would most look up to. A word or a phrase may fix the mind along certain mistaken lines. When we say the "Power," we mean the totality, the Being from whence everything came and to which everything returns, the Power whence springs the fact of law, the Source of the all-pervading Unity, the Guiding Energy which takes sides for justice and righteousness. But when I speak of "Him," then almost instinctively a limited but great human consciousness images itself before me, while the vision grows smaller by the mere use of such a word or name.

Those who have the most complete and assured convictions about a personal, intelligent, loving, Infi-

nite Father, must not think ill of us or misinterpret us or blame us, if, in awe and reverence, we speak of the "Power" and not of "Him." By such a use of language we only confess our sense of the infinite grandeur of that Being.

This is one reason why, as I shall have occasion to say in another lecture, I prefer to meet the name of the Supreme Being in poetry or when set to music, rather than in the personal speech of our everyday life, or in the literature of science or philosophy. When we voice this name in poetry or music, we leave scope for the expansiveness of all the noblest ideals associated with it. At such times we shall not run the risk of treating one aspect of deity as if that were the whole. There are times when it gives me deep pleasure to listen when people are singing the beautiful old hymn, "Nearer, my God, to Thee." I like to quote the name of the deity in verse, to think to myself how

"behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow keeping watch above his own."

When using the name of the deity in this way there is no sacrilege; for it means to me that the Nature of Things is on my side when I am on the side of the Right. Such usage in music and verse is safe and legitimate, while we may shrink from it in the bald language of the creeds or philosophy.

What we need to preserve and develop is a reverence not for the name, but for these three aspects of deity we have been describing. Many names will be given; but none will satisfy. Many phrases will be invented; none may answer. One name or phrase

may continue for awhile ; then prove itself inadequate and be thrown aside. And so it can be with another and still another. It is of no consequence, after all, about the words and names. We may be only too glad that they do change or drop away, if the truth which underlies them becomes too large for them to express. As one among many seeking after greater light, and wishing to surrender myself in obedience to conscience, I can only say that in using the word "God" I am thinking rather of the "Substance" than of "Him," rather of the Fact than of the Person. I say to myself, "The Great Power is on my side" — and with that one thought I am satisfied.

VI

THE "ETHICAL" CHRIST

WHAT an advantage it would be if a judicious mind, clear and comprehensive in its scope, could come to us from some other planet, unacquainted with our history; and then, by a long, careful investigation, analyze the series of events, and tell us, without prejudice or partiality, just what rôle Christianity has played in developing our present civilization. It is useless to expect anything of the kind from those who dwell in our midst. No man could analyze the religious atmosphere he has breathed all his life, in the same manner as he would deal with something quite extraneous. The literature of the day, the elements of our early education, household life everywhere, our art, music, even the structure of our daily speech, is saturated with the story of the passion and the crucifixion of Jesus. If a person were to make the effort to escape from such an influence, he would have to go away from our homes, avoid listening to our music, not see our architecture, shut himself off from the sight of the pictures on the walls of our dwellings, use some remote Oriental language—in fact, make his whole life over again.

It is not a question whether you do or do not believe in Christ, but rather what Christ you believe in. We each construct our own idea of such a per-

sonality; as we do with living men of our own times. The subjective side of every character of history will always take on a special aspect, according to the person who interprets it. This would be true even if we were all agreed upon the facts, and had a complete, trustworthy mass of material before us. It would be impossible for any man, under existing circumstances, to see the subject in an absolutely true perspective.

The great point on this matter which concerns us now is not as to the historic basis of Christianity. We may not trouble ourselves to ascertain just what Jesus said or did, or to determine who or what he was. The problem for us is to decide why men in such great numbers have believed in Christ. This is what I should term the ethical aspect of the problem. What is there in the natural human heart which makes many people believe in Jesus, accepting Him for their Leader and Master? We know perfectly well that most of these persons are little acquainted with the historic basis of Christianity; but they believe just the same. If we could answer this question, we might come much nearer to the foundation of the ethical life.

Those of whom I speak have found in the story of the passion and death of Jesus, something which appeals to their hearts and inspires them with exalted purposes. Some of the rarest, noblest, grandest men of the last eighteen centuries have belonged to this class. If we could only get at the real hearts of such men, we should have a clue to our problem. It is the ethical ideal existing potentially in the human consciousness that we are eager to discover and unfold. The religious types such as "Buddha" or

the "Christ" have been, as it were, a great instrument through which this dormant ethical ideal has been called forth into active life.

Suppose that a man whose heart had gone out in the ardour of loyalty and devotion to the Christ-Ideal which had been described to him in early life should undertake to search for the historic basis of the conception which had been presented to him at that time. Suppose that he turns to all the old literature on the subject at his command, reads about the conditions of those times, examines the multitude of pictures which have been given by the many interpreters. Suppose that he reads or studies the doctrines which have come down from those days and which are regarded as explaining the character and influence of that Personality.

And suppose that as the outcome of all this study and investigation it strikes him at last as one bewildering maze, beautiful, inspiring, sublime in many of its features, but so hopelessly in a tangle that he cannot get a unit of consistency out of it. Suppose that the different images or pictures do not seem to hang together or belong to any one personality; that the accounts are confusing and vague as he reads them, while the interpretations of other men are still more vague and confusing. Suppose that in spite of all this, he is still awed and fascinated by the story of that life; that his heart responds with deep enthusiasm to the image presented to him there; and that even the doctrines which in their exact form appear to him as irrational and unphilosophical, yet appeal to him profoundly when taken in a more universal sense.

I ask: What Christ is left to such a man? He does not believe what the others believe. The historic basis for the image or picture is taken away from him. He cannot say that he is sure that Jesus said this or believed that or taught the other. He is not prepared to accept some of the most fundamental teachings attributed to Jesus. He cannot pray to Him or worship Him. Yet when he looks at the story of the Crucifixion, it moves him or appeals to him as no other event in history, or as no other dramatic conception ever appeals to him. He goes back to the pages describing that life, and reads them with an ever-increasing interest. The music which has been composed to illustrate the events narrated there, stirs him in a way no language can express; all other music seems tame and commonplace beside it.

The longer he lives, the greater may be the effect which the story of this life has upon him. The thought of it is a source of help for him when he is in trouble; it soothes him when depressed or discouraged; it elevates his moods and strengthens his enthusiasm when he is tempted to abandon the cause, of Duty. He likes to dwell on that life; to study it, to trace its influence everywhere. He looks upon it as by far the grandest, noblest, most beautiful picture in the whole range of the world's literature. I press the question once more, what Christ is left to such a man?

Again and again as I have watched people in their devotions at a religious service, the query has come to me: what have they and I in common? As I have wandered up and down the aisles of the beautiful cathedrals in Europe, seen the people at their

prayers, listened to the music as it floated in and out through the arches, I would keep asking myself: What does this mean to me; is it apart from my life; can I have no share in it? Am I to think that it is all a fanciful illusion on the part of those people there? Am I so much superior to them as to be on an altogether different plane of being? Or is it possible that it is largely only a difference about facts of history, or opposite views about doctrinal theories which we neither of us can understand? Must there not be the same fundamental ethical ideal in their hearts which was born in mine? I take the furthest extreme, and watch an uneducated, half-civilized creature walk in from the streets and drop down in prayer before a crucifix. The chasm between that person and myself is immense; but is it impassable? It is quite certain that I cannot assume that person's attitude; it would be impossible for me to kneel before that crucifix. Yet the crucifix itself holds me in another way.

What is it that men believe in when they speak of their "Christ"? Most of those who devoutly worship this name, with all that it implies, are not philosophers; they do not enter into the subtle metaphysics of the problem; they do not grasp the subject in the scientific spirit. Yet it must have a certain definite and profound meaning to them; else it could not hold them in such a singular way. When we know that a man will lay down his life in the cause of his belief, as many a man has done in devotion to his "Christ," then we are sure that that belief must have an extraordinary vividness and reality among those who truly share it.

I should like to contrast the two aspects in which this conception has presented itself and by which it has held sway for these eighteen or nineteen hundred years.

On the one hand, there is what I am inclined to call the "mystical" Christ, although the *doctrinal* element may often predominate here, and for many it would be the "doctrinal" Christ. It is the Jesus of another world and speaking for the Beyond or that other world—the being with a halo around His head and with something more than human about Him. This is the Jesus who has formed the subject for art and also the subject for the creeds, the being whom we may worship, but with whom we can never compare ourselves. When we think of Him, He comes before us in the pictures of the great masters of painting, or the theme of some of the profound sayings of the gospels about the "only begotten Son."

When taken from its mystical side, this belief leads men to conceive of the Supreme Power everywhere as an Infinite Personal Father, who yearns for the higher welfare of the human race. He enters into our struggle against evil, sees how ineffectual much of our effort appears to be and what a tremendous task we have before us. At last He determines to take up our cause and to make the heaviest conceivable sacrifices for our sakes. To this end He sends His only Son to come down to earth, take our form, bear the kind of burdens we have to bear, assume the penalty of our iniquities on His shoulders, and at last go through the agony of dying for us. In some manner not easily comprehended this step is supposed to put

an entirely new aspect on the struggle of the human race against evil, so that now mankind may escape the former thralldom and rise to an ever-loftier height, if only the struggle is pursued in the true way.

Something of this kind is before the consciousness of most of those who are sustained by a definite, positive belief in a Christ. It is the substance of the thought on which the creeds are based, and which the music and architecture of the churches seek to interpret. What shall we say? Many of us cannot accept this doctrine in such a realistic form; we cannot make ourselves believe it in this concrete shape. A positive, realistic conception of this character may strike us as unphilosophical, because we do not see the clear evidence for it, or because it is in conflict with our metaphysics. Does it have no meaning or significance for us on this account; must it be altogether contrary to the fundamental religious convictions of those who seem to be outside the pale of Christianity?

I turn once more to my first question, and ask myself what there is in this mystical Christ which has won so many persons to espouse it, with full certitude of conviction. It is impossible for me to assume that they have all reasoned it out for themselves, seen the evidence for it, and accepted it after a great deal of reflection. I know that many of them have believed in it just because they wanted to believe in it, because it appealed to something instinctive in their natures. It answers to a certain cry of their hearts or to some more universal belief which they have held to, half unconsciously, throughout the whole

course of their lives. And so they have taken it as one interpretation of this more universal belief.

They have somehow felt in their struggle against evil, or in watching this struggle going on in the human race, that the nature of things took sides with them in their efforts. It is the instinctive belief to which we have referred in another lecture as connected with our most fundamental and most important conception of deity. Men have fancied that the nature of things was not utterly cold and heartless, not utterly unsympathetic or indifferent to the moral advance of the human race. The very existence of an ethical ideal in themselves has kindled this faith in a "tendency toward the Good." This I am convinced is the reason why many people have *wanted* to believe in such a mystical Christ, because it corresponded with this more universal and original faith which we have mentioned. It was in this way that such a belief could take a more definite shape in their minds and answer more fully to their groping efforts. The fact that so many millions of people have accepted this "mystical" Being with all their hearts, implies a most widespread faith that the nature of things is on our side in the struggle against evil. This to me is the first profound ethical import of Christianity, for it interprets to what is original in the human heart.

And now I can see that there is something in common between myself and that uneducated, half-civilized creature who may stray in at the cathedral door and drop down on his knees before the crucifix. But even to such a person this picture may have a sublime aspect, though in a most realistic form. I can

see now one reason why he surrendered to it, accepted it, and loves to kneel before that image. The same instinct exists in me as in him, though it assumes a different shape according to the character of our minds. We both believe that there is loving-kindness throughout the universe, and that all our struggles towards the good have a meaning, and that we are helped in our efforts in ways that we ourselves cannot explain. For him this belief takes a definite, realistic form which I may not share. But the chasm between us is not impassable. In the original or fundamental convictions which made him glad to accept this mystical Christ, we are united.

And yet we have only suggested one-half the significance of a Christ. The subject has another aspect, more tender and winning, more sweet and persuasive. From this standpoint it makes a much more direct appeal to our hearts. We are thinking of "the man of sorrows acquainted with grief," the "human" Christ.

This belief is of another kind. It tells of a man who was in the humblest circumstances of life. As He grew older He was impressed more and more with the sin and sorrow of the human race; until at last He sets out to devote His life to win men away from their over-anxious cares about material welfare, and to persuade them to think of the higher value of the inner spiritual life and of the satisfaction which comes in devoting one's self to the cause of justice and righteousness everywhere. He sacrifices all His personal interests, surrenders the pleasure of home, incurs the hatred of the very men whom He most cared to help. His sweetness, gentleness, patience, never waver. He wears the same look when the

crown of thorns is upon His brow that He wore when teaching the people on the hillsides of Galilee or when "going about doing good." Then to prove to the world His faith in His teachings and as a last means of serving the human race, He gives up His life and dies on the Cross.

The human Christ has less of the strange, mysterious, or incomprehensible about him. He is near to us, close to our hearts, a man whom we can understand and whose aims we can appreciate.

The supreme significance of this Jesus as of the mystical Christ, is all conveyed to us *by His death*.

A great deal is said about the beauty and the value of the ethical teachings of Jesus. But there have been others almost as beautiful. At times we can get as much, if not more, from the sayings of the Stoics or from the Scriptures of Buddhism. Then, too, other men have given up their lives and "gone about doing good." But in the whole range of the world's literature there is only one "Crucifixion." Other men have died on the cross; still others have been martyrs in other ways. But no death scene described to us anywhere in the annals of history begins to compare with the story of the death scene of Jesus. Nothing anywhere can equal that cry in reference to His enemies: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." It is the culmination of all that is grandest and noblest in ethical or religious literature. The evidence for what is at the centre of a human character is displayed in a crisis. A tragedy brings everything to the surface. All the good and evil appear at that time. The peculiar something which Jesus was trying to teach to the

people was placed incarnate before them when He came to die. They could see it, feel it, touch it, even if they could not comprehend it. The Passion and Death of Jesus give us the living concrete presentation of His gospel.

When one says "He died for me," the thought is not upon the fact of the death, *but upon the way He died*. It is the utter completeness of the surrender, which makes it so powerful.

This is the Jesus which appeals to the human heart; it is the "human" Christ. We know how many believe this story exactly as it is delineated in the early Scriptures. They are as sure of the truth of every point in the story as if it had occurred before their own eyes. When they speak the words "for Christ's sake," it has a definite, concise, realistic meaning to them; as if they could see Him for themselves. They pray to Him, worship Him, kneel before His image. It is all living, real, and plain to them.

And yet some of us, as I have already intimated, cannot see it in that light. From the standpoint of historic fact, the story for us is vague and confusing. We may not be able to convince ourselves of the truth of every point, no matter how great an effort we make. The same query arises: Does that separate us altogether from the other believers; do we share nothing in common with them, when thinking about the human Christ?

It is the same problem which faced us before. We go back and ask, not whether these facts actually occurred as they are described to us, not whether those who accept such an account as accurate history are justified in their standpoint; but rather, why for the

most part people have been so quick to take up with the belief. This is the crucial problem which carries us far into the sphere of Ethics. We are well aware that the majority of men are not careful students about historic facts, we know for the most part they would not have the time to make this study. Yet millions of people have put implicit faith in this "human" Christ.

How can we account for this discipleship? The reason for it must lie, not in the historic basis of facts, but in something in the human heart to which the story appeals. As one thinks of it more and more, one begins to understand why vast numbers of men and women have unhesitatingly accepted this story of the human Christ. It, too, has answered or corresponded to a more universal belief instinctive in the heart of man. It is the ideal type of beautiful character there presented to us, which meets with a response from a deep ethical ideal within ourselves. My desire is to explain why men have admired this Jesus so much; what there is peculiar in that life which makes it so winning, grand, and awe-inspiring. It is the human heart itself we are studying and analyzing, and not the historic basis of Christianity.

The fundamental point in that wonderful life is the completeness of its self-surrender in devotion to an ideal or sacred Cause. It is a typical illustration of what I have sought to describe in another lecture as the "religious life." There have been partial instances of such a life recorded at various times. But this is the most complete picture we have of it anywhere and that is why we bow before it with such reverence. It is absolute, unqualified self-surrender.

It is not the universality of this picture which impresses us ; but rather the completeness with which it presents to us one phase of the universal Ethical Ideal. Its emphasis on one supreme virtue is what makes it effective. Stop and think for a moment what type of person comes to your minds as the most complete illustration of true Christianity. Do you not recall among the people you have known some sweet, gentle nature, not necessarily feminine, although with that side of the character more fully developed ; one who is always anxious about the welfare of others and endures every trial without a murmur ; one whose whole life seems to consist in "giving up" for the sake of others ; a person endowed with a sublime passive heroism, though quite unconscious of it himself, and to whom, therefore, endurance seems to come naturally as if he took pleasure in it ?

This type is not stern and hard like that of the Stoic, but delicate and refined, exceedingly gentle on the surface, with the strength far down underneath. Such a person will strike you as most tenderly human in ordinary moments ; it will almost seem as if there were no will there at all. But when a crisis comes, then the character is seen to be as sure and steady and unmoved as the seated hills. It is essentially a passive heroism, a capacity for endurance rather than for aggressive activity, a sweet submissiveness which rises into positive sublimity when the occasion calls it forth. It will be a loving and lovable type ; such as we shall be drawn to instinctively. Only at those moments of a crisis or a tragedy will it seem quite removed from us by its heroic grandeur.

The keynote of Christianity is in the virtue of

humility. Jesus won His supremacy through His teaching of "self-denial." All that He had to tell the world is suggested to us in the one command to deny one's self, take up one's cross, and walk in His footsteps. No other system of religion has been as effectual in producing examples of this one virtue.

There is a positive craving on the part of the higher, purer human nature to become the servant of something or somebody, of some cause or some being which we instinctively recognize as superior to ourselves. We actually yearn to merge our wills and our individual purposes into a larger Will or larger Purpose. We are most completely ourselves when somehow we have *surrendered* ourselves. In this picture of the human Christ we see an absolute self-surrender. Jesus was humility itself. I watch the suffering Christ on the Cross after all the agony He had undergone, without one thought about Himself, anxious only to achieve the purpose to which He had consecrated His life and to show the human race the true way of conquering evil. And I say to myself, what wonder that men have clung to the crucifix! This human Jesus did conquer evil; He showed mankind how to subdue the wild, erratic, self-asserting spirit which exists in every one of us. He hung there upon the Cross a Conqueror. It had all been accomplished through the one means of self-denial.

We may go on asking ourselves, what is the worship of the "Cross"? why have men taken it in as a standard in the great conflict of life? We shall get only one answer. It is because of an intuitive recognition on their part of the worth of this type of character. Christendom has bowed before this con-

ception of Jesus because men have been driven to think that the religious life of self-surrender is the highest and most perfect life.

This is the secret to the most perfect volume of devotional literature which has developed out of Christianity, and to which I frequently allude — the “Imitation of Christ” by Thomas à Kempis. People of the most widely diverse beliefs read this book with a singular fascination; men who utterly reject the commonly accepted historic basis of Christianity will nevertheless be drawn to this volume and be inspired by its teachings. They may not have exactly the same “Christ-worship” as Thomas à Kempis; but they are awed by its tone of humility. They will say in spite of themselves: “How grand it must be to give one’s self up in that way!”

When it is asserted that the lesson of self-denial or the suppression of one’s personal will, for the sake of others, is all based on a mistaken principle of ethics, — I can only reply to such persons: Account to me, why it is that millions on millions of people have loved and believed in this human Christ. We must assume that it has appealed to an ethical ideal already existing in their hearts. It shows us what human nature instinctively looks up to. We can never *create* an ideal which does not lie potentially in the human consciousness. The fact that such a vast number of men and women for eighteen or nineteen centuries have looked up to this human Christ with such belief and reverence, proves conclusively that this type of character corresponds at least to one aspect of the complete

Ethical Ideal, and that it will always exert its influence on human history.

But the endurance displayed in this type of character is quite different from that of the Stoic; and this is a point which I care especially to emphasize. There was something hard and cold in the Ethics of Stoicism; it would teach us how to endure just for the sake of endurance; its ideal, as we know, was the Strong Will. But, on the other hand, there is something sweet and winning in the endurance of Jesus. His passive resignation was not that of the philosopher. The contrast is suggested to us in the difference of ultimate purpose. We ask: What was Jesus making the sacrifice for? why did He cultivate endurance? what was His motive for giving up even His life? We know the answer. It was done for the sake of His fellow-men. This is what introduced the elements of sweetness and tenderness in the type illustrated by the human Jesus. The "for one another's sake" is the clue to all. It was not a lesson of self-suppression or self-surrender just for itself, because of an inner craving of the heart to be strong, — but "for the sake of one another." We can understand, therefore, why Christianity has done so much toward emphasizing the fact of universal brotherhood.

When, therefore, I see another in prayer or worship before the image of Christ, I may have to say: I cannot pray your prayer or take your attitude of worship toward the Personal Jesus; whether all the events you believe in actually occurred, I do not know; but the *motive* which makes you revere this human Christ exists in me also. There is the same

instinctive reverence on my part toward that image or picture. Like you, I should be glad to realize something of that ideal in my own life. I, too, aspire to live in that spirit, to have that gentle, yet heroic, endurance, to surrender myself to some larger Purpose, to deny myself and walk in those footsteps, and to do what I can to help my fellows towards the higher life.

To others this "human" Jesus will have occupied a very definite place at some one epoch in history, just as the "mystical" Christ will have assumed a realistic, concrete shape in their theology. But I look upon this sublime type of character rather as something which has developed through a long progressive series of impressions covering many centuries. In the very effort to interpret the meaning of this wonderful life, each man himself has helped to give more concrete shape to the picture; he has sought to clothe it by means of the very ideal which it has awakened and called forth. The Christ of Gothic architecture, of the painters of Italy, of Thomas à Kempis, is a conception which has grown out of the heart's own yearnings as well as out of the events which took place in Palestine some eighteen or nineteen hundred years ago. This, to me, gives it an even greater significance and makes the picture seem the more true in a universal sense. When you show to me a Christ, as a type of character such as you would like to cultivate in yourself, then I am one with you. I see in this image the story of a struggling humanity, seeking for a means to conquer evil, and endeavouring to picture for itself a form of life by which that conquest can be most fully assured.

In these two ways, therefore, I have aimed to suggest what Christ is left to us, provided we cannot take the conventional standpoint and make ourselves believe as most others believe. To some it will appear cold and unsatisfactory, unreal and impersonal. They want the living man of nineteen hundred years ago, the Divine Being speaking directly in the name of an Infinite God. But I am not addressing myself to those who are perfectly clear in their own minds on this subject and to whom such a standpoint is consistent and satisfactory. We say to those who have been compelled to abandon that definite aspect of the subject, that the "human" Jesus and the "mystical" Christ still have a meaning for you.

To me this other aspect is even more majestic and awe-inspiring; it seems to put me in closer relationship with all those who have ever believed in a Christ. When reading the story of that life and the accounts of those wonderful teachings, I no longer feel, however unreal any part may strike me, or however untrustworthy the records may appear, that I must try to believe it all. All this is aside from the main point. As I turn the leaves of those Scriptures, an Image rises before me of an ideal which men have admired and revered, and which they have wanted to reproduce in their own lives. The stories of the saints and martyrs no longer come before me as mere creations of fancy or superstition. What took place on the outside may be disputed. But the efforts which such men have made to be like their Master and obey His precepts are tremendously significant. There we have unquestioned reality. We read the life of Francis of Assisi, and at first it

seems wild and erratic. But when we discover the purpose which inspired him, then we judge differently. We are no longer disturbed about his superstitions; we are fascinated in seeing how he tried to make the Jesus he believed in, an example for his own life. If men cared more to live like Jesus rather than to lay such emphasis on what they are to believe about Him, Christianity would immediately take new strides forward and acquire a new hold upon mankind.

We might call this other Christ which is left to us who are unable consistently or conscientiously to accept the conventional beliefs, the "Ethical" Christ. It must always be regarded as in part a creation of the ideal in ourselves, because unless such an ideal already existed in the human heart, men would not accept it when presented to them from the outside. In all candour I shall have to say that it appeals to me, moves me, and inspires me far more than when I viewed the subject in the conventional way. It gives me greater pleasure now to read the Scriptures which tell the story of that life. I enjoy listening to the music of Handel's "Messiah" more than ever before. The paintings of the great masters, which illustrate that life, stir me more profoundly; the splendour of the cathedral architecture, which speaks for the new spiritual view of life, has an even greater hold upon me. I can even read the "devotional literature" of Christianity, and be more helped and inspired by it. I take even larger satisfaction and am more than ever kindled in my aspirations when reading some of the writings of such men as Jeremy Taylor or John Henry Newman.

Formerly I was constantly led to think how much I disagreed with such writings; but now it is the other way, and I keep thinking how much I am in sympathy with them. As long as we have to dispute about points of philosophy or the facts of history, the disagreement will have no end. But when we come down to the issue, what our hearts hunger and crave for, then we draw close together. We who may be dubious about historic records which are perfectly satisfactory to others, will nevertheless be equally anxious to see this ideal type of character more and more reproduced in ourselves.

We have in the Ethical Christ a sublime picture of lowliness, meekness, passive endurance, and gentle humility. It is the sweetest, saddest, purest, gentlest, most sympathetic, and most exalted example of this kind in the whole range of literature. It is *one aspect* of the Ethical Ideal in the most complete form conceivable or comprehensible by the human consciousness. This one aspect as presented to us in the type of character we have been studying, is unsurpassed and unsurpassable. We can only say, "This is humility, absolute, complete."

But this "type," as I have termed it, includes the "mystical" Christ, as well. It is a dual character — on the one hand, a human Jesus, "going about doing good," and, on the other hand, a Being wearing a halo of light about His head, coming as if with a message from another world to justify us in our instinctive faith in the goodness and perfection at the Heart of Things. It would be idle for us to attempt to separate these two sides completely, dealing with one of them as history, and with the other as legend

or illusion. You cannot force apart what has been welded together by eighteen centuries of feeling and belief. You may tell the story in a certain way to the young, selecting those features which may be most inspiring to them, as you may do with the story of any life. But for the mature mind the two phases belong to one character. What I get from the "Ethical" Christ is not a collection of facts about one man who lived at a particular epoch, but rather a consensus of human feeling or faith which strengthens me in my aspirations and in my faith that "it is all going to come out right." It is not the historic figure that I am thinking about, but the ideal in the human heart to which the outlines of the Christ-figure correspond.

I should like to bring together the twelve sayings attributed to Jesus, which have most moved and affected me. They will illustrate the types of character which we have been seeking to describe. No two persons would make exactly the same choice; yet it is always worth the while for each man to do this for his own sake. I count them over one by one — sometimes only a phrase, then again a whole sentence, interpreting the language in the spirit which has been explained in this and the three preceding lectures: "Not my will but thine be done;" "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls;" "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you;" "Whosoever would be chief among you, let him be as one that serveth;" "This commandment I give to you that ye love one another;" "Whosoever would

come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me;" "When thou doest alms, let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth;" "He that looketh on evil to lust after it hath already committed it in his heart;" "Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father's notice;" "Where your treasure is there will your heart be also;" "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." This is my chaplet of wisdom associated with the Ethical Christ. I would tie it about my neck and bind it upon my heart. Philosophy will never dissolve it for me; a study of the events of history cannot change it; for it is the Christ which is born out of the hunger and yearning and aspiration of the Universal Human Heart.

And yet we make a mistake when thinking of this as a *complete* example of the Ethical Ideal. This unfortunate conclusion has led many a person to turn away from the Christ-image. He has expected to find there all the virtues, all the noble types of character, blended in the one. But there could be no such composite picture. Men have instinctively surrendered to the Christ because they found there such a complete example of *one aspect* of an *ever unfolding Ideal*. It is an illustration of absolute humility. All the instinctive reverence we would pay to this one virtue, we would pay to the Christ.

Every type of character which appears in history, will be characteristic of the age when it was being developed, and will emphasize the virtues most essential for that time. In the earlier centuries, when the Christ-picture was taking shape, the ideal aspect most called for was passive endurance, heroic sub-

missiveness, gentle humility. It was the meek and lowly of heart, who could be the truly great men and women of those times; for there was no field or no sphere for the aggressive virtues. The bold, determined, energetic will, pushing ahead to change the course of events and to alter the trend of history, would have had little opportunity to display itself if, at the same time, it had been united with the spirit of self-denial or self-surrender. The "Christ" character of that age knew how to endure and to submit. This is one side of the perfect ideal, and, as such, it will hold its exalted place through all ages to come.

But it is in our own time that the aggressive virtues in their noblest form are beginning to find a sphere or opportunity to display themselves. It is only in more recent times that social conditions have taken shape so that there could be any hope of altering or improving the structure of society. What is called for now is not merely a sublime humility or passive endurance, but also the aggressive energy, the determined will, the venturesome mind by which we may go forward and plant anew the garden of life. If we neglect these other virtues, we shall pay the consequence, and may witness the aggressive spirit of man plunging ahead without being guided or held in check through the opposite virtue of self-denial or self-surrender.

We say it in all reverence: Humanity has now to clothe in more realistic form this other aspect of the Ethical Ideal. It was only vaguely or dimly outlined in the Christ-picture, because little called for in those earlier ages. We do not wish to be out of sympathy with the past, nor seem to commit sacri-

lege toward its treasures. We know only too well what those treasures are worth ; yet we cannot avoid expressing the conviction that a New Conscience has to appear ; that a new type of character should be called forth, adapted to existing needs and possibilities, though it too must be the offspring of the Universal Human Heart as one further aspect of the Ethical Ideal.

VII

THE MESSAGE OF THE STOICS TO THE PEOPLE OF TO-DAY

ETHICAL literature has this value, that it nerves or refines the spirit. Systems of philosophy come and go. They appeal to the mind and are outgrown by the mind. But ethical experience may voice itself in a single sentence, and the sentence lives for centuries after the teacher dies. There are any number of jewels of such wisdom scattered throughout literature. They do not come through the groping of the mind after universal principles, but rather as the sudden cries or exclamations into which moral experience has been crystallized.

In this way, as we know, a few great and strong souls, and a few who wanted to be strong-and great, but who made a sad failure in the effort, left behind them certain stray utterances which we speak of as "the teachings of the Stoics." Those men said: "We have found this to be true about what life is worth and about the purpose of life." At the present time we take up these collections of ethical experience and they meet an answering echo in many of us, although not in everybody, and not in anybody completely and fully, because we see further than they did. But those sayings give some of us

new strength, and we like to read them as gleanings from the world's Sacred Literature.

Stoicism was something more than a system of thought or abstract truth. It inspired the heart to endure nearly every form of trial. It sweetened the cup of pain and sorrow. Men became firm, brave, and heroic under its influence. Because of their confidence in its teachings they were able to meet death as they would a peaceful slumber. It had the quality of stirring men to self-sacrifice. It enabled them to be calm and serene in misfortune. It gave to history some of the grandest illustrations of human character. It had within itself the elements that we attribute to religion. It was the highest product of pagan thought, the noblest gift to the world from Europe in antiquity.

At the outset I should like to give an instance of its spirit from one of its teachers. It is the oft-quoted selection from the thoughts of the slave Epictetus:—

“How is it possible that a man who has nothing, who is naked, houseless, without a hearth, without a city, can pass a life that flows easily? Behold, a man has been sent to you to show you that this is a possibility. Look at me who am without a city, without a house, without possessions, without any one to serve me. I sleep on the ground, having no family, no home, but only the earth and heavens and one poor cloak. And what do I lack? Am I not without sorrow? Am I not without fear? Am I not free? Did any of you ever see me fail in securing my desires? Did I ever accuse any man? Did any of you ever observe me with sorrowful countenance? Did I ever blame man or God?”

This was the Stoic, the man who under all conditions could be calm and serene, yes, even happy,

although he had absolutely none of those goods which most people would consider essential to happiness. When a man can make a complete success of life in the face of such circumstances, it is certain that he can teach us something if only we are ready to sit at his feet and learn. He knew whereof he was speaking because he had tried it himself.

I should like to make up from his utterances a chaplet of "Twelve Sayings." They will be like "pearls of great price" coming from the dark depths of the ocean of human experience. Yet they are jewels of wisdom as beautiful as if reflecting the most glorious sunlight under the blue vault of the open heavens. We will repeat them over one by one.

"When a man asks you how to give the most pain to an enemy, tell him it can be done by preparing himself to live the best life he knows how to live."

"It is not poverty which produces trouble, but desire; nor does wealth release from fear, but only reason."

"What we ought not to do we should not even think of doing."

"No one who is a lover of money, a lover of pleasure, or a lover of glory is likewise a lover of mankind; but only he who is a lover of virtue."

"Men are not disturbed about things, but by their views about things."

"Freedom and slavery are so many names of virtue and vice; but both these are matters of the human will."

"Never say on the occasion of anything, I have lost it; but always say, I have returned it or restored it."

"This is duty, to act well the part that is given you; but to select the part, *that* belongs to another."

"Seek not that the things which happen should happen as you wish, but wish that the things which happen should happen as they do, and you will have a tranquil flow of life."

"Choose the best life, and habit by and by will make you like it the best."

"If you wish for anything which belongs to another, that which is your own is lost."

"The wise man may be struck, but when he is struck he must love those who struck him, as if he were the father of all and the brother of all."

What a privilege it must have been to have had the experience which would develop these opinions! And yet they came from a houseless, homeless, friendless cripple belonging to the undermost stratum of human society.

Stoicism had one main thought, and expressed it over and over again with unceasing and almost wearisome monotony. There is practically a single principle at the basis of its whole philosophy; and it goes on sounding this, in a persistent monotone, as though, by repeating its doctrine often enough and long enough, somehow that principle might be implanted in the character of the listener.

This lesson is expressed in the one word "endure." The Stoic always comes back to the thought of *endurance*. His one ambition was to possess this quality of character. The more he realized it in himself, the more complete he felt himself to be. The joy and delight of his life came from the efforts he made to secure it.

But the thought is always the same. If you have laid plans that are dear to you and they fail, endure it. If you have a hope in your heart for some good on the morrow, and it is not realized, endure it. If your aims in business or professional life do not thrive, endure it. If, just as you are at the point

of success another steps in and snatches away the fruits of your efforts, endure it. If the friend who loves you, is led to doubt you, to disbelieve in you, and you lose his friendship, endure it. If some one near and dear to you is taken away from earth, endure it. If pain and sickness come, and you are suffering in every nerve of the body, endure it. If you lose your money, your occupation, your friends, endure it. Whatever goes against you, whatever interferes with you, whatever brings you trouble or misfortune, whatever calamity arises, it should all make no difference, it should help you to learn the lesson of endurance.

There is a certain grandeur in that monotonous demand. We are sure to be more or less moved or stirred with the persistent exactions of that teaching, saying to us: "Be strong." At times we feel the muscles becoming firmer, we are conscious of the soul receiving new energy, simply by the iteration and reiteration of the words: "Endure and be strong." Of every evil, of every unpleasant experience, the Stoic would say: "It should make no difference. Why should one care?" There is something magnificent in this contempt for the outside, for what is not within one's self.

But we ask ourselves: How are we to show that we can endure? What shall we do when the calamity comes and misfortune is at hand, when the pain is upon us, when the sorrow threatens to overwhelm us? The answer of the Stoic is the same that we give to a child who is hurt while at play. We tell him: Do not cry; go on with the game. That is the demand of the Stoic. Do not cry, but go ahead.

Only, what we say to the child in reference to the hurt of the body, the Stoic says to the grown man in reference to a hurt of the heart or mind or spirit: Do not wince, go on as before. We are to show within ourselves, beyond where the human eye ever looks, the same composure that we gradually acquire in the countenance or face. Many a man gets so far as to keep the muscles of his face calm, while he writhes in agony of mind. But that is not Stoicism.

We can see that this is not the sweet submissiveness that we ordinarily associate with endurance. It is not the virtue of humility; not something passive; not necessarily a sitting still and holding one's self composed and firm. There is something almost savage in its masculine quality. It is aggressive rather than submissive. Stoicism does not imply accepting whatever evil threatens us, for it is not a gospel of non-resistance. It does not ask of us to bow the head when some one would strike. No, it is stern and severe rather than sweet and gentle.

The problem of the Stoic was how to be able to submit to the *inevitable*; how to keep firm and assured and never flinch when something came that he could not avoid. He would have been aggressive enough when it would have been of any avail. Strength, to him, did not mean passive endurance in the face of *anything* that might happen, but the power of holding the nerves of the soul steady and strong so as not to lose self-control in the face of the inevitable. His great desire, therefore, was not to become more gentle, but rather stronger, through calamity. If something hurts now, the value of it

is to strengthen us, so that we may endure something which by and by would hurt still more.

If it had not been for difficulty and trial, for pain and suffering, if there had been only joy and happiness everywhere, there never would have arisen any philosophy of Stoicism. The men who believed in this gospel had discovered all the worth there is in the discipline of evil. No other religion has ever taught it more plainly or appreciated it more completely. Others have said that pain exists in order to make us see the worthlessness of human life. "But no," said the Stoic; "this is just what makes life worth living, because it gives us the opportunity for discipline so that we can become firm and strong."

He loved strength of soul, just as the athlete loves strong and steady muscles. And he knew, like the athlete, that as a rule such strength is an acquired gift, and not something received at birth. Men of power rarely come from the walks of life that have been smooth and easy. The Stoic had discovered a law of human nature. Those who always have their own way do not become the strong men and the strong women. Discipline and difficulty are what make character. The Stoic, therefore, sought to walk in the rough and stony paths, preferring difficulty because he relished the strength acquired by overcoming it.

It has sometimes been asserted that the aim of the Stoic was the suppression of the passions. I do not take this view. What he wanted was to acquire the *strong will*. It was by his struggle with the passions of his nature, in the effort to bring them under control, rather than to crush them out,

that he could get the will-power, the possession of which was his keenest delight. These passions furnished the rough and stony path over which he walked in his process of self-discipline.

You ask what pleasure could a man take in being a Stoic? what was to him the joy of life? All existence meant only endurance; why not end it all and die? But no; he had in his way as intense a delight in existence as one could possibly imagine. He seemed to have the philosophy of despair and yet to have a way of getting supreme joy out of that despair. In spite of the sombre gloom that pervades those teachings, there is something exhilarating about them. The more I have studied them, the more it has impressed me that those men took a profound pleasure in life, although the pleasure was not of the ordinary kind. In reading their thoughts, there is a satisfaction for the moods. A certain contentment, as well as steadiness of purpose, steals over the mind as we peruse them. You feel yourself at such moments on a loftier plane of being.

But what was it all for? What made the effort worth the while? What motive did he have which urged him on in his purpose? He was explicit in telling us what he regarded as the true aim of life. But now we press further with the query, Whence did he get the motive for it? What reason had he to care for strength? Why should he have striven after this power of endurance? He had his reply. There was nothing uncertain in his mind on this issue any more than there was on the other. The answer has been inspiring through all time. It stands out in letters of fire across the skies as a

lasting testimony to the worth of those teachings. In whatever else he may have been mistaken, in his reply on this one point he was sublimely correct. We may not agree with him that the sole purpose of life is to develop the strong will or to acquire endurance. But when we ask about the ultimate motive to such high effort, we can be unanimous in our approval of his answer. "It is worth the while to do this," he would have said, "*because it is worthy of one's self as a man.*"

That was a terse reply, and it had tremendous significance. It was a profound discovery of that age, to grasp the idea of positive human worth; that is, the privilege and glory of just being a man. They conceived in the sharpest terms the value of the contrast between ourselves and all the rest of the animate or inanimate world. The Stoic gave his complete answer when he said: "I am a man, and I choose this as my life purpose, because I have received the privilege of being a man." We have become used to this thought nowadays; but it was a great, new idea at that stage of human evolution. There had been no clear appreciation that the human race as such is by its very nature essentially superior. In those days men believed in the elect few, assuming that there were a certain number of persons having something in themselves which classed them with the gods. But man as man, set over against all the rest of the universe—the majority of thinking people had not realized what that meant.

But the Stoic grasped it and was perhaps the first cosmopolitan. He did not urge the principle of uni-

versal love. That came from another source. He did not teach the ideas involved in universal brotherhood. But he did see and assert that there was something in the very nature of man himself, which could make the human being divine and separated him from all other forms of existence. Just because we have in ourselves something superior to all other sentient life, for the very reason that there is in ourselves an independent individuality, on that account we have motive enough to live and work, and so to show ourselves worthy of the exclusive privilege given us of belonging to the human race.

It was a glorious gospel, that conception of human worth, that emphasis on the privilege simply of being a man !

But what was it that made the peculiarity of human worth ? Wherein was it that he saw the contrast between man and all other forms of existence ? Here too he gave a concise answer. Other creatures are all the time dependent on what occurs outside, subject to extrinsic conditions. They have no central self, no means or power of making themselves independent of those outside circumstances. Man alone possesses this unusual capacity. By his power of will and reason, he is able to control conditions, to change circumstances, to adjust himself to what is on the outside, and so actually to acquire a strength that could almost defy circumstances. "Be strong in yourself because you alone of all animate or inanimate things, through insight and will, possess the power of acquiring such strength." This is what he meant by "living according to nature." He uses this phrase a great deal, and it has been a stumbling-

block to many persons who have sought to understand Stoicism. It should not be taken in a strictly philosophical sense, because there is only one law and one nature and we must obey it whether we will or no. Ethical systems speak with less exactness than systems of pure philosophy. In this regard we need always to think of what the man is *trying* to say ; that is, to get at the sentiment or fundamental convictions out of which the immediate thought has developed.

The Stoic never quite explained the meaning of this phrase. But as you go on reading his teachings over and over again, it gradually becomes plain and distinct to you. You recognize in this language his interpretation of the significance of the human soul. "According to nature" implies "according to what we have in our nature that is superior to all other natures with which we are acquainted." He wanted to be strong, to acquire the power of endurance, because the possibility of doing this was the peculiar privilege of the human being. It was the one thing which marked mankind off from all other physical, material existence. He could only keep saying: "I want to be strong in myself because then I am most completely and truly a man." But in saying this he showed that he had a philosophy of life.

I have asked myself again and again what it was that Marcus Aurelius believed in. He was, perhaps, the greatest of all the Stoics. What was the one thing he most cared for? What lay at his heart as his supreme desire? What was the one idea or principle that saturated his whole being and gave him the clue to the purpose of life?

It was, I think, the idea of the "soldier at his post" — the conception we have mentioned already in the lecture on "Duty." He did not question "How came I to be at this station; who put me here; why should I not have been elsewhere?" He had no blame to lay on the Universe, no blame to lay anywhere. He believed in duty. He was through and through impressed with the conviction that man's supreme obligation is to stay faithfully at the post assigned to him, to be the soldier on guard. How it came that he was assigned to that post he did not presume to understand. His one aim or purpose was to stay there at the post and do his work faithfully. He says this over and over again, never thinking of the fact that there was any privilege in being a King or an Emperor. The privilege he thought about was that simply of being a *man*.

Yet where was he to look for help and sustenance? What should he lean upon? Always to this inquiry he gives one and the same answer, for it is his basis of consolation.

When trial or difficulty is upon you, where shall you look for help? "Within the self." But if affliction menaces you, if the dearest objects of earth are taken away, whither shall you turn for relief? "Within the self." If your aims fail, if your schemes go wrong, if success is snatched from you, to what shall you look? where is the relief? "Within the self." If misfortune comes, if sickness is upon you, if what you have striven for or struggled after for many years is taken away from you, where shall you look for a resource? "Within the self."

This was the supreme element of consolation to

Marcus Aurelius. He speaks of it so many times that we almost grow weary of it. But by and by we appreciate its significance. It was no philosophy of selfishness, no mere self-concentration. It was that other conviction that there is a divine, superior element in one's self and that relief alone can come by cultivating this true superiority.

But what then is the satisfaction in it all? Why should I stay at my post as a soldier? Why be faithful to whatever task may have fallen to me in life? Why rely always on the self within myself? Why look to the divine which is within me, as the source of consolation? Why cultivate that higher self? To what purpose is the effort? We eat and drink, and to-morrow we die. But where is the reward; what is the compensation? Who shall pay me for this endurance; who shall give me back what I have surrendered; who shall make up to me for what I have sacrificed?

At this point we are at the grandest height ever touched by pagan philosophy. It was the religion of the Stoics, more than any other, which asserted that virtue is its own reward. This is a commonplace doctrine now, though few men even in our own day actually believe it. The Stoic offered no crown to follow the cross. He had only one answer to the question "Why?" or "What for?" He would say: "Because it gives every high nature the most true satisfaction to pursue this course." He could assert: "I prefer to do this, even if there should be no further reward. My own nature craves it. Though my life end in a vapour, though it vanish the next day in smoke, though I awake no more on the morrow,

either in time or eternity, it does not matter. I would rather be this kind of a man, do this kind of a thing, live in this kind of a way. It is worth the while all on its own account; for I have tried it and know."

The answer was sublime. It has been proven for at least once that motives for high conduct, for ideal aims and lofty purposes, existed and were regarded as adequate, wholly irrespective of any compensation or reward. Once in the course of human affairs there were men who cared to be true and noble, although they did not feel any positive hope that they would receive an additional return for it in a life after death. Here were men who without any such assurance regarded it as worth their while to aspire after an ideal manhood all for its own sake. People may think otherwise about it now, and look beyond Death. But I am glad that the Stoics did not have any such expectations, so that it might be proven that for once human nature was capable of being inspired by the love of virtue, wholly for its own sake.

Shall I venture to single out and arrange a chaplet of "Twelve Sayings" from Marcus Aurelius, just as we have already done with Epictetus? Occasionally we shall come upon a thought, then again a sentiment, once or twice an aspiration or prayer.

"A prince may shrink into the figure of a private person and yet, when the commonwealth requires it, be able again to act with all the force and majesty becoming the character of a prince."

"We should accustom ourselves to think upon nothing that we should hesitate to reveal to others if they asked to know it."

"If any man is able to convince me that I do not think or act right, I will gladly change; for I seek the truth, by which no man was ever injured."

"That which does no harm to the state can do no harm to the citizen. That cannot be for the good of a single bee which is not for the interest or good of the whole hive."

"Only one thing troubles me; lest I should do something contrary to my nature as a man, either in a way it does not allow, or what it does not allow."

"Nothing happens to a person which it is not in his power to go through with."

"When I have done a good act and another is the better for it, why should I care to have others know it or why should I expect to have a requital?"

"Men exist for the sake of one another; therefore either teach them or bear with them."

"To-day I rushed clear out of misfortune; or rather I threw misfortune from me, for, to speak the truth, it was not outside nor even further off than my own fancy."

"It is the property of a rational soul to look into its own nature, form its own qualities, and shape itself to what character it pleases; and so when a life proves long or short, it gains the end of living."

"Nothing that does not enter my mind and get within me can ever injure me. Let me hold to this and I am safe."

"What is agreeable to thee, O Nature, is so to me also. Nothing is early or late for me that is seasonable for thee. Everything is fruit for me that thy seasons bring. From thee all things come; in thee all things subsist; through thee all things return. And so I say of the world, 'Dear City of God.'"

That great emperor during many years of his life made such collection of sayings out of his experience. They came through his personal struggles, through trials in his daily life.

Whenever I think of those men, a work of sculpture always comes back to me as illustrating the qualities of strength or endurance which they sought to acquire. It is the figure of the "Dying Gaul" in the museum of the Capitol at Rome. The Stoics

were to a degree in that attitude all their lives. We see the figure leaning on one hand, the head bent slightly, the whole form holding itself firm while the life-blood is oozing away. He sees the drops falling; he can count them one by one. He knows that he must die; yet he reclines there firm and strong; resolute as though a century of existence were before him. That arm shall not give way until life gives way. As we stand watching, we enter into his mood. It almost seems to us as though we caught something of his strength and resolution. Whether life endure for a minute or a century; though one saw it ebbing away each instant, — the arm shall stay firm, it shall not yield until the end.

One last question confronts us. How did it happen that Stoicism never became a universal religion?

In reply to this there are two different answers which might be given. Even if Stoicism had presented the very noblest possible ideal, it could not have won ascendancy over the multitude, but would always have been a religion for the few. There are two classes of men and women. On the one hand, some will prefer to take life as it comes, to live for the most part in the pleasures of the day. They accept the world as they find it, taking what joy comes along, and seeking more, if too much effort is not required. They live the life of the world; and they die. It has not necessarily been an evil life; only it lacks the element of idealism. The strength of such persons is not within themselves, for they are creatures of conditions. Probably the majority of the human race will always be of this type. It is natural, inevitable. Men want happiness. They will seek it

even if they cannot find it. They will snatch it to-day, although they may be sure they cannot have it to-morrow.

But then there is always a minority of another type. They represent the sterner, severer natures. They are not satisfied with the pleasures of daily life; it is not enough for them just to live. They want to acquire something, to feel themselves becoming stronger, ripier, more mature. They would be willing to make sacrifices, to forego pleasures, even to shorten their lives if need be, in order to acquire that inner strength. They would rather live in accordance with the higher self within themselves for a few years, than to have a whole century of a lower order of existence. It is to this class that Stoicism appeals.

But there is a second reason which explains why Stoicism has never won popularity. There was a mistake in its teachings which, of itself, paralyzed its influence for the future. I am thinking of the illusion prevailing so extensively in antiquity, which led men to look upon human affairs as moving in a circle. They spoke not so much of the wheel of fortune as of the wheel of fate. We hear them say: "What has taken place, will hereafter take place again. All life is the same. Human affairs move in a circle. Why, then, should we care to live ten thousand years, when we should only see history repeating itself over and over again?" That was one great flaw in Stoicism.

An enthusiastic lover of ancient literature once asked me to mention a single idea of modern times which could not be found already in the earlier

philosophy of Greece and Rome. I replied by quoting the lines of Tennyson:—

“For I doubt not through the ages one unceasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the
suns.”

We are used to this other thought now, and cannot appreciate the effect of its absence eighteen centuries ago. We do not see how much it implies, that they should not have had any idea of the fact of evolution. To-day this is a grand element of consolation. We do not see the result of our own efforts in our lives or in our own age; but we always think of our work as bearing fruit sometime. We dream of a coming millennium and are sustained by thinking about it, when facing the defeat of our own labours or realizing how little they accomplish. We know, most of us, that the Social Ideal will not be realized to-day, or even in the next century. But no condition of the world, however dark, no overthrow of existing institutions, no inroad of barbarians, no conceivable calamity, save the extinction of human life on earth, would check the faith now existing in the human heart, that somewhere and sometime a better and higher age is coming.

Stoicism was a one-sided religion and a one-sided philosophy. So is every philosophy and every religion. You cannot get all your soul craves from any one source. Each ethical system or each religion may help us in some one special way.

I do not say that every one should read the Stoics. Their thoughts are adapted to one class of persons. Those who are quite at peace within themselves,

whose lives run smoothly and evenly, requiring no steadying force to nerve them to their task; those who hunger from the mind rather than from the heart or from the will, none of these will care for Stoicism. They had better let it alone. It will be almost meaningless to them. If they read its teachings, they will only be led to cavil at them and wonder why they do not get more. But those who are more or less at struggle within themselves, travelling over rugged roads in the spirit, the restless and the troubled, to whom life is something of an effort and a burden, those who are groping about for a staff or support because there is no peace or calm within, — some of these will get help from the Thoughts of the Stoics, and would do well to read them.

It would be worth the while for some of us to have the volumes of the Stoics on our shelves, — Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius. We should mark what is impressive there, whatever is most helpful to us, selecting what strikes us as the noblest and most inspiring. Then we can lay them aside for what is nearer and closer to us. We shall not care for them at all times, because they make life positively too stern and severe. They are one-sided in their excessive enthusiasm for the strong will; concentrating the thought too much on one's self, even if it be the higher self, and weakening the ties of human affection. They do not have enough regard for the heart, for the sentiments, for the joys of human fellowship, for the glory of Universal Brotherhood.

But at moments we need just this spiritual nutriment. We may take them down from our shelves,

turn over the leaves, catch anew the inspiration for our wearied wills, and strengthen ourselves by their strength.

We may go too far and injure the character, by making too much of such teachings. We shall not do this if we appreciate their one-sidedness while recognizing their worth. In the same way we can get assistance at times from reading that old poem :

“My mind to me a kingdom is,”

Or we can receive the same impulse from Matthew Arnold’s “Self-Dependence.” Yet both these poems have a narrow range and could make us self-centred or self-concentrated, if we did not cultivate another side of our nature with the help of other literature.

We should not study the teachings of Stoicism as we would study philosophy, — not search there for abstract wisdom. We should read them just as we would listen to certain kinds of music, and let them play on our moods. It is our moods they cultivate, and not the mind. One class of literature may sweeten the cup of sorrow ; another may steady the wavering conscience ; still another may help to refine the heart or cultivate our sense for the beauty of nature. Stoicism nerves the wearied will, and that is its value.

VIII

DOES HIGH CONDUCT IN THE LONG RUN BRING THE GREATEST AMOUNT OF HAPPINESS?

HAVE you ever, in a moment of absent-mindedness, lifted your eyes from your work, looked out into vacancy, and caught yourself in a sudden pause of reflection, saying over in your mind with a vague sort of half-troubled wonder, "What is all this for?" The spell will last only for the shortest interval; it is gone as quickly as it came. You drop your eyes again on your task, and resume the thread of your previous occupation. You may scarcely remember the interruption. Nevertheless it came, and it was registered. You will be certain to experience it again.

We want pleasure! We hunger for it as we do for meat and drink. Life appears so bare and void without it; a chill comes in our veins if we look ahead and see no chance of securing it. When we rise in the morning and our thoughts turn on the work of the day, if we can look forward to no joy to illumine the pathway of the hours, then it all looks to us like one dreary treadmill. We appear to need happiness as we do sunshine and the light of day. When it comes, we bask in it and feel our-

selves young and strong. When it does not come, we are liable to wither and grow old; existence itself is a burden to us; we do not care to live.

Yet, alas! there is no sphere where an individual can so easily involve himself in illusion as in anticipating what would really give him satisfaction. He may continue for years in the pursuit of something, and then when he gets it discover that it was not actually what he wanted at all.

It is to be assumed that I am addressing people whose lives have not been altogether happy. Those who have the greatest amount of what is ordinarily termed pleasure are the least inclined to analyze it, or would be the least disposed to talk about it. The discussion would jar upon them and interfere with the very satisfaction they are taking in their existence. They would even be reluctant to come in contact with pain or suffering. A really happy person would probably never stop to think about the meaning of happiness. Only when a touch of the opposite gets into their lives, are they ready to study it or give much attention to the subject.

Beyond any doubt, therefore, every person to whom I am speaking has had more or less pain in his life. Those who have had to *endure*, will be the ones most interested to know what it all means. We are inclined to look upon happiness as the natural and normal something to which we should all be heirs. Why, then, do we not get it? What is the secret of the fact that it is dispensed with such a seeming lack of discrimination? We look back upon our past lives and keep asking ourselves: Why did we have to go through this, that, or the other trying experience?

Was it because we had been to blame for some misconduct? Was it a mere accident? Or was there purpose in it, even if we cannot understand the purpose? Was there law or reason in it all?

It is not to be supposed that we are all excessively unhappy, or that our lives have been one dark stream of wretchedness. But we are conscious that pleasure and pain have been mixed together a good deal in our experience and that we have had a little more of the bitter than the sweet.

It is all very well to talk about the scales being balanced by and by. The fact is, that we do not care to wait. We should like very much to get at the reason for the delay. Why all this suffering *just now*? What have we done that we should be obliged to endure so much? We are told all the time that we should aim after the higher life. Justice is set before us as the rule of conduct. Loyalty to the sense of duty is held out to us as the first principle for our lives.

"Well, now," you say, "will it bring pleasure, joy, happiness? Are not the people who take the other course just as content, or perhaps even more so? It is the old, old story. They get as much good out of life, as much real satisfaction, without being so enthusiastic for justice. Are you going to ask us to be wretched for the sake of obeying the law of duty?"

It almost seems as if Nature had put a tax, and one of a very heavy kind, on high conduct. Over and over again it is asserted that the best people are usually obliged to endure a great deal. Must we regard trouble and annoyance as the reward for pursuing ideal aims?

You may say there is no point to my subject, because you assume, on the other hand, that the very meaning of high conduct implies the form of conduct which brings the greatest amount of happiness. You may deny that any aims could be considered high or ideal, the pursuit of which affected us otherwise. You may believe that the purpose of life is pleasure. You would therefore consider all conduct to be pure and high which brought this in the greatest amount.

Nevertheless, an impression exists that there is a conflict between happiness and ideals of conduct. The human race had such ideals long before men had come to analyze their subjective sensations. They had an ideal of what they wanted to make of themselves or of what they wanted to become, long before they had scrutinized the motives which led them to pursue that aim, or the sensations which accompanied them in the pursuit. It is certainly a disputed question whether the greatest amount of happiness comes to men in their efforts to realize special aims. It is also a debated point what aim in life will bring the greatest amount of satisfaction. I venture to assert that standards of conduct developed before men began consciously to make happiness the supreme object of life. I do not believe that we first instinctively direct our efforts in order to secure the greatest amount of that sensation.

As a matter of fact, in the aims we follow we have a tremendous amount of the opposite experience. The ideals we seek for, no matter what they are, cause us a great deal of misery. The man who has

a dominant ambition or purpose of any kind, is destined to have much pain in his life.

An immense amount of confusion prevails as to the very meaning of happiness. One could sometimes wish that the word might be struck out of common speech. Language came into existence at an earlier stage, when there were no shades of fine distinction in ordinary experience. For the beings low down in the scale there are only two substantial facts,—happiness or misery. This would apply to the whole animal kingdom. They could always make a dividing line and the line would be sharp and clear. They are in a position to determine definitely what is pain and what is pleasure.

What is true of animal life may be equally true of a part of human life. A great number of people could make the same distinct dividing line. On one side would be the sensation called "happiness," on the other side the sensation called "misery." There would be no difficulty for them in placing either experience on its appropriate side of the line; and if they could have their way, they would have all their experience on the side of happiness.

But I remind you that as human nature grows finer, as the fibres of the soul multiply and develop greater sensitiveness, it becomes less and less easy to say on which side of that line any given experience belongs. When you fancy that Nature has laid a tax of misfortune on high conduct; when you assume that happiness as often falls to those who ignore the higher scruples, I ask you to make sure what you mean by the term. If you are with a very inferior person, low down in the stage of evolution, just

emerging out of the animal kingdom, his use of language will be such that you cannot argue the question with him. There is one scale of conduct for the animal world and another for the human world. In the former domain they live to themselves and eat one another. But I am speaking of human life. The standard in our sphere is otherwise.

If you belong to the superior order of men, you can never speak of one single experience. Your analysis would involve a whole multitude of sensations. You cannot say, this one occurrence made me happy, that other event made me wretched. It is rare that you would be able to discover the exact cause of the pain of mind which you have to endure. It would be even more rare for you to be able to measure the exact amount of happiness or misery which came from any one experience.

Yes, this is an exceedingly vague word. You can confuse yourself endlessly in debating over it because of the long race-history during which associations have gathered around it. All our language relating to the higher self, the phrases about "good and evil," "pleasure and pain," "happiness and misery," "joy and sorrow," "misfortune or success," — all these contrasts probably started from bodily sensations. Yet how much less simple a matter it is to make such distinctions later on when dealing with spiritual experience! It would be meaningless for you to speak of a pleasure to the body from the cut of a knife. Yet how is it that men sometimes actually take satisfaction from the blow of misfortune? Will you explain to me the subtle connection between joy and sorrow by which sorrow may produce a form of joy?

You ask what I mean. Stop a moment and think. You have had a friend who was dear to you and the friend was taken away. You said that it was an experience of unqualified misery, that the loss had no compensations. It was keen, unmitigated sorrow. But have you ever noticed that some time after such a loss you came to appreciate that person even more than before? Have you observed that beautiful traits of character which you had not perceived when he was alive, come back to you now? Has it struck you that you have a deeper, purer, higher comprehension of his real nature? When this revelation dawns upon you, does it give you no pleasure, is there no satisfaction or happiness in such a finer recognition on your part of the man or woman who was so dear to you? Is there not a positive joy now in that memory?

But if this is true, how can you say that the blow was one of unqualified severity? There has come along with it a deeper form of happiness than you had ever known. The loss continues just the same; the suffering goes on as before; but now there is a peculiar joy blended with what you have to endure.

A person of an inferior nature would not be conscious of this. He would only know of each experience as belonging on one side of the line or other.

Many a man has said that he really never knew what deep pleasure was until the blow of misfortune had struck him. Up to that time he may have lived on such a low plane that he did not appreciate what it could imply to take a true satisfaction in life. Trouble called forth all his latent capacities, and then for the first time he began to live.

How do you secure happiness? Is it by sitting still and just being conscious of a sense of comfort? Is it a form of animal slumber? Why, even a dog has a higher standard of pleasure than that! He gets satisfaction out of the chase and not from eating afterwards. You win the most intense happiness by the form of energy you display, by the capacities in yourself which are aroused to action. The more capacities which are set to work, the greater and deeper will be the scope of your happiness. Misfortune often trebles the amount of satisfaction which a man gets out of life, because it awakens what was latent in his being. The blow which struck him develops him, and makes him susceptible to new and nobler forms of pleasure.

The point we are coming at is this. Perhaps the best way to express it would be to submit to you a question. Can you be intensely happy and intensely miserable at the same time? To the lower class of natures this would have no meaning, and would only cause a smile. But we are talking of the higher order, because it is only this class which will stand by the rules of high conduct when the emergency arrives.

It is my conviction that a person may be capable of both these sensations at the same instant; that there can be two threads of feeling running along side by side in one consciousness at the same time, — so that you could not put yourself on the one side and say that you are utterly wretched or completely happy. Ordinarily you will first give voice to your suffering, and that is why you often place that first in consequence or importance. It is what gives the shock.

Sometimes men have to make a tremendous sacrifice. In doing this there is an acute sense of disappointment. They may not have the compensation of concentrating their energies in another direction. They may be obliged just to stand still and endure. You say that this would all be unqualified misery. But how can you explain that look on the face of the martyrs? Either the great artists who left their masterpieces on canvas have been utterly mistaken, or else even in sacrificing much that is nearest and dearest, one can find joy and satisfaction. When you give up something, you do it for a purpose. In gratifying that purpose, is there no pleasure?

Human beings cannot get along without happiness. It is what saves the human race from extinction. If it were not for pleasure, the race of man would die out and pass away from earth in a very short time. The discussion at issue is not over the fact, but over the form of happiness. Occasionally you will be obliged to choose between two kinds. One form of pleasure may kill off the possibility of another form. If you take your satisfaction one way, you cannot have it in another. If you pursue what gratifies the beast, then you cannot have the higher sensations of the man. The distinction is sharp and important.

No genuine religion, no ethical system, ever really called upon the human race to get along without happiness. It is all a mistake to assume that religion has consecrated suffering. It has rather consecrated the higher joy which may *accompany* one form of suffering. Pleasure in one form or another is the normal and natural heritage for every human being on the face of the earth. If he does not get it,

there is something awry somewhere. In most instances where this occurs, the man has destroyed his capacity for any form of happiness, by trying to get both kinds at the same time. He has sought after a form of satisfaction he could not realize, and wasted his energies in getting nothing at all.

Now and then unhappiness may predominate overwhelmingly in certain lives. When a man will not undertake to adjust himself to the inevitable conditions, when he insists that the outer conditions ought to adjust themselves to *him*, when he will not put his life in accord with the circumstances which envelop him, when he insists on securing one form of pleasure or none at all,—then he will not get what he wants, and will cry out against the Nature of Things: “Why hast thou deceived me?” Such a man is doomed to the very quintessence of misery. The most acute and prolonged wretchedness usually comes to those who simply sit still and chafe internally because they cannot have their own way or get just what they think they want. They literally burn themselves up by a slow internal fire. Some of the saddest failures in all history have been where men who were possessed of high natures, fine capacities, and deep sentiments, consumed and lost their lives in raging against the Universe or against God, endlessly crying out, “Why hast thou deceived me?”

If you are going to dictate to the Supreme Power, if you propose to turn to the Nature of Things and say, give me the kind of pleasure I want or none at all, you may rest quite assured that you will get none at all. The Supreme Power at the centre of everything is not going to be dictated to. You may

as well accept this first as last ; otherwise you will reap the whirlwind. It is usually because men undertake to dictate to their "God," that they make a failure of their lives and get sorrow and wretchedness when they wanted happiness. The most beautiful words on the subject I have ever met with came from George Eliot, speaking as if from the lips of Savonarola : "Man cannot choose his duties. You may choose to forsake your duties, and choose not to have the sorrow they bring. But you will go forth ; and what will you find? Sorrow without duty — bitter herbs and no bread with them."

You ask : Does high conduct in the long run bring the greatest amount of happiness? We can only answer : If you mean by this, worldly prosperity, then in the long run a great amount will not tend to fall to the share of the man with the highest ideals. You must, to a certain extent, make your choice. It would be rare for you to attain both ends. It will be unusual if you secure material success on a large scale and cling to your highest aims at the same time. The best evidence for this would lie in the fact that there are relatively few persons who attain great worldly prosperity. But you could not say that there are very few who have high aims in their lives and live up to these ideals. Just how many there are in this latter class could never be told. They are persons who keep out of sight ; because one of the characteristics of high character is not to care very much for popularity or notoriety. When a man takes pleasure in that sort of success, he is more on the average level, seeking what the majority of men would like to have.

The answer to your question may also depend a little on what you mean by high conduct. If you imply with this phrase just plain, staunch integrity, —although it really amounts to a great deal more,— then I would answer: Yes, plain integrity in the longest run brings the greatest amount of happiness. This is a disputed point in the everyday world. Over and over again my assertion is denied. The examples are certainly striking which illustrate the contrary standpoint.

To the end of the world the controversy will go on as to whether honesty is the best policy. Personally, I take very little interest in the discussion. Men of ideal aims will not care much about the subject. It would not concern them to have it settled definitely once for all whether it is the best practical policy to adhere to honesty. People of this other class would cling to it, irrespective of what we term "policy."

But for the average man it is an interesting problem. I believe that under any circumstances the tendency is to bring the greatest amount of ordinary happiness to the honest man. The instances which might be put forward to prove the contrary would only serve to establish the rule. Any person could count off on his fingers a number of names of men who have risen to worldly prosperity and apparently secured a great deal of happiness, and yet who have accomplished it by most questionable methods. We name no names. That is quite outside of my purpose. But what about the thousands upon thousands you cannot count off upon your fingers, who have tried those same methods and did not get suc-

cess? Where are their names? They drop to the side and are stranded. There they lie as failures or half failures. No one takes any great interest in them. They belong to the unnumbered, unnamed dead.

As we all know, few persons ever really think definitely about pursuing happiness as an aim. They do not analyze their own sensations or their own purposes. There is a certain outcome which they strive for, if they have any ambition at all. Suppose that you stop a boy in the midst of a game and ask him whether he is getting happiness out of his effort. He would scarcely understand your question. But if he undertook to answer, he would probably say that he was not thinking about that at all,—that what he proposed to do was to “win the game.” Does the pleasure come after his success? No, on the contrary, the very pursuit of the aim, in spite of all the efforts and suffering he endures, gives him a certain intense satisfaction which is another form of happiness.

Is it not pretty much the same in real life? The game is far more earnest; for the purpose is solemn, the stake is heavy, and the ambition is along another line. But the man gets his real joy while struggling after his purpose, rather than in the ultimate accomplishment of it. When he succeeds, that too gives him additional satisfaction. But the actual quantity of pleasure in the success is small in comparison with the amount which came to him in the long intervals during which he was working in order to secure it.

There is no absolute measure of happiness. The

human race has become too much individualized to put the amount of pleasure in the scale for each man and then weigh it out over against the unhappiness which he has experienced. What brings satisfaction to one man may cause wretchedness to another. Each man's nature is set in its own respective key. There may be a general average or tendency, but nothing more. The effort to weigh the amount of happiness in the world, would be almost grotesque. The question we are discussing, therefore, could never be answered absolutely. It is complicated by that other feature of *quality* in the sensation, as was pointed out by John Stuart Mill.

Sometimes in mild weather, when walking along the streets at the busy time of day, I see a man sitting in a chair by the doorway. He is perfectly still and quiet. He scarcely moves. Yet he seems to be enjoying himself immensely. I fancy as I look at him that he would like just to sit there in that way in such a balmy atmosphere forever and ever. It is his conception of pleasure. You say he is happy. "Yes," I answer, "in a way." If you want that kind of happiness, you can have it. There is not much difference between that and annihilation.

In such a calm atmosphere that man does not suffer. He knows no want. Many persons would be only too glad to have that kind of life to the end of their days. You can have it if you wish. All you have to do is to set your stake sufficiently low down. Get near enough to the ground and you can secure what you are after.

The moment the man sitting there stirs or moves, the instant he stands up, he will begin to experience

a certain degree of pain. The more energy he displays, the more work he does, the greater his activity, the larger will be the amount of actual suffering he must undergo. You will say, why then did he not stay there; was he not supremely happy? It depends, we answer, on what you mean by happiness. You can take your choice. You cannot have the higher satisfactions without enduring something for them.

When you listen to music, have you ever noticed that the pleasure is sometimes akin to pain? Has it ever struck you then that sensations of pleasure and pain seem to chase one another, pursue one another, run along side by side in your consciousness at the same time? Unalloyed pleasure would be empty pleasure. The higher nature would scarcely dignify it with the word "happiness." Much of the keenest pleasure in existence comes from our sympathies, our affections. They play on us very much as music does. We are keenly alive to the joy of one person and the sorrow of another, and sympathize with both of them at the same instant. This is not unalloyed happiness. By no manner of means! But the quality of it is such that we would choose it in preference to the other, every time, if we have had experience of both.

A man says to you, there is really no use in seeking after the higher life, that it will only bring you suffering. The high-strung nature is always more sensitive to pain. You can never be perfectly happy, for your finer sympathies will be a drag upon you. When you would like to give yourself over to unqualified pleasure, then the sympathy for another man's

misfortune or lack of opportunity will check your joy, subdue it, and perhaps altogether destroy it. If you have the higher aims, you will be hindered in your ordinary motives, haunted with remorse for the evil you have done, often held back and tied down at the very moment when you are on the verge of securing the thing you are after. These high ideals will only suppress you and defeat you. Instead of going ahead and getting what you are struggling for, you will constantly be measuring your acts by certain rules. The law on the outside is bad enough in the way it interferes with a man's pleasures. If you are going to establish a law on the inside, that will be still worse. Then you will get no pleasure at all. Happiness of any kind will never fall to your lot.

There is a certain amount of truth in this attack upon high aims or ideals. It is a mistake for us to urge men to pursue the higher life on the supposition that they are going to get all kinds of success, and all forms of pleasure in that pursuit. As we have said, a man must take one side or the other.

On this issue I take my stand with the Idealists. Happiness is not the highest aim in life. No mere sensation could be the ultimate ideal to strive for. We leave that to the lower sphere of the animal kingdom. We have something to create, a block of manhood to shape and fashion into noble form. Only that could be the supreme aim, which would call forth all the highest capabilities of our nature and concentrate them on one purpose.

I believe in the "divine discontent" — the restless struggling and yearning, the dissatisfaction with one's self, the torturing desire to get further ahead, the

sorrowful brooding over the mistakes and woes of our fellow-men. What if it does imply pain? Why should we care, if our whole life seems to be made up of endurance? There is an ideal we are struggling for, and that is adequate to satisfy us. The men who have most helped the world spiritually, have been unhappy men. "Wholly unhappy?" No, emphatically not. They have known a joy and satisfaction which the plain mortal has no knowledge of, unless it be in his dreams. If there is no other way, I would prefer to be with the unhappy men and work on their side.

You are not obliged to take this standpoint, but can live on a dead level of commonplace existence if you prefer. You can go with the average, get along without the ideal aims, and at the same time secure a great deal of solid pleasure out of your life. It will be of a rather negative kind. But there will be less to offset it. It would be pretty much the same to you whether you lived one hundred years or a hundred thousand years. The whole amount of your pleasure could be added up as so much per day or per century.

The man who proposes to follow a line of ideal conduct will probably have a great many of what we call "ups" and "downs" in life. He will experience joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, in great confusion. He will have much of the one, but also a great deal of the other. Oftentimes he will not be able to say which one has been in the preponderance. He will be defeated at one time and successful at another. He will have lived more in fifty years than the other man would have

lived in five hundred thousand years. But he will be perfectly sure of one circumstance: He knows that the kind of pleasure or satisfaction which he gets, when he gets any at all, will be intense. At the end of his life he will have no hesitation in telling you that the effort is worth the pain it involves. He will have had an immense amount of happiness, taken an immense amount of satisfaction in his life. But he will have had a vast deal of unhappiness as well.

We can never settle the whole problem definitely for every man and woman. But there is one point in connection with this great subject before us, which cannot be overlooked. We must not forget that one special form of pleasure must often be surrendered by the man who proposes to adhere to rules of high conduct; and it is also one of the greatest pleasures to the ordinary mortal. The man who sets a high aim for himself must expect to stand squarely on his own feet and do without popularity. This I conceive to be the first essential for progress in the ideal life. It was the original step that had to be taken in order that human nature should become individualized. When the human soul began to take shape as a separate personality, it had to sever itself in part from what is now termed the "social consciousness." Man was obliged to set rules for himself often contrary to the opinions of others, and to think about what the social consciousness should become centuries hence, rather than what it happened to be just at the moment when he was alive.

High conduct calls for independence of character. If you choose an aim for yourself, you must first be able to stand alone.

It is doubtful whether there was ever an exceptionally popular man who was an exceptionally good man. You might say that the individual who devotes himself to his fellows, gives up his life for them in his love for the human race, should be the man most loved everywhere. But it has proven otherwise. In order to be universally liked, you would be obliged to give in to the common weaknesses of human nature. High conduct means at the outset something above the average level. It puts you on a different plane from the life of the everyday world, and makes of you a separate type. As fast as the rest of mankind caught up to your standpoint, you would have established a higher basis. And so the process would go on to the end of human history. Ideal conduct must always be above the average and therefore can never be universally popular. As Amiel said: "The world advances by the successive decay of gradually improved ideals."

You might ask whether, after all, it should matter to others what standard you adopt for yourself. You propose to live in accordance with the higher rules which your inner nature establishes for you. You want to be something more and realize something superior to the average man. You set a distinct aim for yourself. If you are kindly disposed towards others, dealing gently and lovingly with them, why should you be any the less in favour with them even if you do have your own rules of life?

But you must remember that the separate standard which you would adopt for yourself is, after all, a delicate hint to the rest of the world that they are on a lower level and that they ought to aspire to the same

height which you are struggling to reach. This makes other men restless in spite of themselves. If there was no real call in their natures to adopt the same ideal, they might care less about the aim you establish for yourself. Men chafe at the higher efforts made by the few, because of the dumb consciousness awakened in themselves that they too ought to be making such efforts. Every man following this course will be like "a prophet of evil," warning his fellows of their mistakes. You will not be liked any the more for such an attitude.

You can, of course, make the unhappiness you must endure from this cause much greater, by an exaggerated aggressiveness with your rules of conduct. There is always a danger from this tendency among persons anxious to follow the higher life. They are inclined to thrust it at other people and attack other people in one way or another. But in the long run a man accomplishes much more for his higher standpoint by being an example of it than by talking about it a great deal. There are times when he must be aggressive. He may be driven to refuse acquiescence in the conduct of another. The point to be remembered is, however, that such an attack involves also a responsibility. He should always, therefore, enter upon such a step hesitatingly, while he may continue to watch *himself* with a relentless self-scrutiny.

The problem is open for us to decide. We can choose our position and walk in our own way. Each man will select the form of happiness he most cares for. We can see plainly enough that there are many kinds.

Yet there is one anomaly which may seem difficult to account for, if what I have been saying is true. It is an odd fact that most of us associate our unhappy experiences with our struggles, and even try to save the young from such painful effort by making their pathway smooth and easy so that they shall have a more complete happiness. Yet the happiness we should give them by that means is really much less complete. In the face of all our deeper insight acquired by what we have undergone, we seek to give them a pleasure of the common kind and hesitate about introducing them to the nobler form. But this is only because we do not think enough about it. We forget that our happy memories are also linked with those very same troubled times.

When you look back upon your past life, what epochs recur to you with the greatest satisfaction? Do you not like to think over those times when you were enduring a great deal and fancied that life was exceedingly hard and very dreary? But could you take pleasure in those memories if there had been no pleasurable sensations at those moments? The very fact that you like to recall them, indicates that along with all you had to go through, there was a certain satisfaction in the effort you were making. I think this explains the anomaly.

What is true of individual life may often be true of all human society. I can see no wisdom in the proverb which says, "Happy the people who have had no history." The times when the amount of happiness was greatest, were not when there was outward peace and when every man was chasing the phantom of material prosperity. The epochs when human nature

was getting the greatest satisfaction out of life have been those of greatest struggle.

High conduct implies the higher nature. When, therefore, you ask whether a greater amount of happiness comes to the higher nature, it is the same as if you ask whether it comes to a man of high conduct. To that I have given my answer. Does high conduct in the long run bring the greatest amount of happiness? Yes, we answer, the greatest amount of the best kind of happiness. What more could you ask for?

IX

THE VALUE OF POETRY TO THOSE WHO WISH TO LIVE IN THE SPIRIT

POETRY helps to lift us from the "earth," while not effacing true human interests. It can do much for the human spirit in the struggles we must undergo, if only we know how to appreciate it. It is natural and yet spiritual! And this is why I believe in its ethical value.

Yet it would be difficult to explain what it is that gives so peculiar an influence to a line of poetry. We may come upon the same thought in another form; but it does not have the same effect. Poetry will linger in the consciousness as a mood; it seems to leave a kind of afterglow. When the sentiment begins to revive, we try to say over to ourselves the line precisely as we first read it or heard it. We put ourselves to a great deal of trouble in order to recover the exact form of language. Nothing else will quite take its place. We can recall the thought or sentiment; but we are not satisfied with the bare thought or sentiment. They do not serve to awaken precisely the same glow of heart. Nothing else will do it save just that one line of poetry.

It is not an uncommon experience for a man to travel hundreds if not thousands of miles, in order to

look once more upon a certain landscape. He can call it back in memory; but as a recollection, it does not bring back the exquisite emotions which came with the actual scene. He might go elsewhere and meet with landscapes of far greater beauty. Yet they will not answer his purpose. He yearns for that one particular scene. It had somehow become a part of himself. There is something almost personal about the beauty of nature. It twines itself about the feelings and clasps them together into one intense experience. We return again and again to the same locality for relief and inspiration, just as we like to go back to the same old human companionships.

What is true of the beauty of Nature is equally true of the beauty of poetry. We can all think of times in our past lives when we have been stirred profoundly by some verse or poem. It has linked itself with our moods and experiences and becomes an actual part of ourselves. When we lose sight of it we are conscious that something has passed away from our being.

Poetry, as every one knows, does not exist for the purpose of enlightening the mind. When we want instruction in philosophy, we read philosophy; when we seek instruction in the principles of life or society, we read ethics or economics. But under these circumstances we do not go to poetry. Its function is not in giving rules of life, laws of nature, or truths of philosophy. Poetry exists not to enlighten but to inspire. It does its greatest work when it fires the heart, rather than when it instructs the mind. It accomplishes its supreme purpose when it stirs the will to action. I believe that the greatest faculty of the human being is enlightened will-power. What

can especially influence this faculty is not philosophy, not economics, not natural science, but art or poetry.

The test of every work of true art must be, therefore, whether it can inspire. Its value can only be estimated by that means. We are driven to measure its power by the influence which it will have upon *us*, whatever it may have accomplished at other times. Homer may have been a greater genius than Wordsworth, but I am equally satisfied that Wordsworth is worth more to us personally than Homer. A great poet in our own language will always be worth more to us than a great poet in other people's language. Art must use our speech. There is just this difference, as every man can observe, in the way poetry or music affects us, and in the way we are affected by learning a new fact or truth. A thought has only to be recognized by the mind, in order to be received and accepted; but in order to be influenced by a work of art, we have to *respond* to it, to give back something out of ourselves.

There is a good reason why the classic poets of other races do not and cannot appeal to us in the same way as the writers of our own age and country. It goes with the very first elements of human nature or of human character. Poetry, as we have said, cannot influence by the bare thought. It is true, we might be able, even now, to derive as much from Marcus Aurelius or Plato, as was possible for the men who were alive in those days. But no human being of our time can be affected by Sophocles or Horace, as were those who lived at the time of those poets.

We can translate ideas or thoughts from another language into ours ; but we cannot as easily translate the sound of a word, or the rhythm of a verse ; we can revive the sentiment, but we can never quite enter into the condition of mind of the man who received it in his mother tongue.

Words or tones are clusters of feeling. Poetry uses words and tones which represent those clusters of feeling. We cannot for that reason fully express the poetry of another language in our own speech. When we try it we lose that quality of tone or sound. We may be able to impart the idea of the poem, but it will not call forth the same sentiment in the heart. That is to say, it fails to inspire. We do not read Homer when we do it in translation. Even the best translation of Goethe's "Faust" is tame and commonplace.

I should like to illustrate this fact of the importance of mere tone or sound as constituting so much of the value of true poetry. Read, for example, the inscription that was supposed by Dante to be placed over the gateway of Hell. Naturally it is mournful. The poet would like, if it were possible, to have tears in the very sound of the words. As he uses them, he would be glad if the eyes of the listener should moisten, or if we should unconsciously heave a sigh as we read them. Instinctively he chooses the most melancholy tones in the scope of his vocabulary.

It reads : —

"Per me si va nella città dolente,
Per si va nell' eterno Dolore,
Per si va tra la perduta gente.
Giustizia mosse il mio alto Fattore :

Facemi li divina Potestate,
La somma Sapienza, e il primo Amore.
Dinanzi a me non fur cose create,
Se non eterne, ed io eterno dure:
Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch' entrate."

This strikes me as being the most perfect illustration in literature of the special power of mere tones in words. There is a sombre gloom about them. You say them over to yourself and they almost give you a shiver. They stir one like the solemn notes of the organ. The only other parallel I could think of, would be some portions of the "funeral march" in one of the sonatas of Beethoven. I do not know that there is anything even in Milton which can compare with them. You may read them over again and again. They would always have the same effect. They will leave just one impression, — that of the most *awful gloom*. Now read the translation of these lines, made by one of the leading poets of the English language in our century: —

"Through me the way is to the city dolent;
Through me the way is to eternal dole;
Through me the way among the people lost.
Justice incited my sublime creator;
Created me divine Omnipotence,
The highest Wisdom and the primal Love.
Before me there were no created things,
Only eterne, and I eternal last.
All hope abandon, ye who enter in!"

There is no poetry at all in these lines of Longfellow. It is a bare, dry statement of facts. He might as well have said in so many words: "This is the gateway of Hell." Unless we can read the language of

Dante, we cannot enter into his poetry ; we can only enter into his thought. If we want to read that kind of poetry, it were far better, under the circumstances, to go to Milton, because he uses our speech ; although he was a lesser genius than Dante.

It is not to be understood, for this reason, that there would be no value in reading the translations of Dante and Homer. Only it should be very clear to us that what we read in that form is not poetry.

No one, on the other hand, would assume that the choice of tones was the *main* element of grand poetry. Place Poe's "Raven" in contrast with Tennyson's exquisite song, "The Days that are no More," or with "The Banks of Doon," by Robert Burns. These latter songs move us so deeply because they are natural and come straight from the heart, while yet their tones are so intensely sweet and sad. An illustration of the same kind in the German language would be the prayer of Gretchen to the Virgin, in Goethe's "Faust," where she raises the cry :—

"Ach, neige,
Du Schmerzenreiche."

If ever there were tears in the very words, it is in this prayer of Gretchen. But it can never be translated. We should come the nearest to it in our language by reading the songs of Burns or Shelley.

There is certainly more than mere beauty of sound in the value of poetry. It is not simply music. To have its full value, it must come not only with an appeal of tones and rhythm ; it should convey a definite feeling or sentiment. It acts, as we have said, quite differently from science or philosophy.

A fact or a law of nature is simply given us as so much raw material to use or apply in any way that may seem best. But of a poetic sentiment something very different is true. We do not use it. We might rather say, it uses *us*. Its value is not merely in the immediate experience it gives us, but even more in the after effect.

Poetry exerts its power by the moods it awakens and the thoughts it suggests. Its distinctive quality is in this power of the suggestive. The wider the range of feeling a line or verse starts within ourselves, the longer these emotions stay in us, the more intense they are, — the more perfect we pronounce the poetry to be. This is one of the reasons why the choice of words is of so much consequence. The sentiment which is given may be beautiful; it might be expected to make us throb for hours afterwards; yet it may leave no effect upon us at all. The mistake might have been in the choice, not of tone or of rhythm, but of language. The line or the poem must recall something in ourselves; it must revive memories. The words used must already in ourselves, through other experiences, have had clustered around them deep or intense emotions. Each word should be a bundle of past feelings; then when it is used in a poem it stirs the other chords; it brings the whole cluster of emotions to life again. By way of illustration let me recall the three lines which to my mind constitute the most exquisite example of poetry in the English language. They are the lines from Shakespeare which were singled out and placed over the tomb of Shelley. Some of us have read the inscription there: —

“Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.”

In these three lines there is every conceivable quality that would go to make up perfect poetry. Choice of words, music of sound, suggestive sentiment; it is all there. I call attention, for instance, to the use of language. Consider the word “fade” at the end of the first line. Suppose that Shakespeare had used instead, some other longer synonym. We can think of a multitude of substitutes that might be introduced by a writer in history or philosophy. Fancy that he had said “expire,” or “decay,” or “vanish.” Would it not have made a great difference, even if the rhythm had not been marred? The poetic effect would have been weakened, perhaps utterly extinguished. It is because no cluster of feelings has centred around the words “vanish,” “decay,” or “expire.” But we cannot pronounce the word “fade” without having it stir in our hearts feelings that used to come as we looked upon cheeks that were faded, upon fading colours in the sky, in human life, or in nature. It is associated with so many deep, intense experiences! It has been used at times when we were profoundly moved or stirred. And so when we repeat it now, it sets in motion once more the feelings we had with those bygone experiences. It even makes us live our lives over again.

Then, too, in these lines, we recognize the power of the suggestive. What a range of sentiments are called up if we linger over the thought! Who that has looked out from the sand or the rocks, on the

surface of the ocean, and seen every instant the variety of colours, one wave transformed into another, the endless variety of beautiful effects; who that recalls these moments, does not realize the significance of the "sea-change" mentioned in that second line! What an endless series of thoughts it might awaken in the soul of a poet like Shelley! Does it apply to the "Cloud" of which he sang, "The Skylark" whose music he voiced in human speech, "The Sensitive Plant" that he wrote about, the "Intellectual Beauty" that he aspires to? Were those the "sea-changes" into which his soul transformed itself as it "faded"? Or shall we think rather of the *after-glow* which the "Cloud" and "The Skylark" leave in ourselves? Or was it rather the mysterious "Eternal" about which the poet himself talked and dreamed so much, and which he longed so intensely to understand and realize? Did the "sea-change" apply to his experience in passing from the beauty on earth to the beauty in the "Unseen," where his soul after "fading" had gone to its rest? How much that is "rich and strange" may come from those "sea-changes" in the fading soul of one living man!

Can we ever fully appreciate or recognize all the suggestive power in three such lines of poetry? Are they not worth more to the soul of man than a fact, an idea, a bare thought? We say them over and over again to ourselves—

" Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange"—

until they seem to sink into our very being and we

lose ourselves in a sea of rich and strange emotions. Yes, it is the afterglow which constitutes the value of poetry; that is, the range of memories, experiences, and emotions that are revived, or the variety of thoughts that are stirred and awakened. It is of more value to make a man think than to give him thought. Philosophy gives him the idea; poetry stirs him to find it for himself.

What is true of a few lines of poetry may be equally true of a whole poem. The choice of words will certainly not be the only important feature. The influence may come sometimes only from the tenor of the entire composition. It may move us chiefly by a tale of memories. We see this illustrated in the little gem "In Schooldays" by Whittier. There is scarcely a man living who has not had an experience of that kind when a child. At some time, under some special conditions in those early days, one or another of our playmates has made a sacrifice for us, or shown us some act of tenderness, put himself in the background for our sakes, been "sorry to have passed above us."

It was a time in our lives when it was not necessary for us to step over one another or push one another aside, in order to accomplish our purposes. Remorseless necessity did not exist for us. Others cared and provided for us, while leaving us to the loves and the friendships and the sympathies of childhood and youth. If it were not for those earlier experiences, poetry would have no meaning to grown manhood and grown womanhood; because there would be no cluster of sentiments to be called up as we listen or read, no associations revived, no

train of bygone sentiments awakened in the consciousness. We love the poems which revive these memories. They bring back those tender years and tender sentiments. They make us live our purer, sweeter, deeper life over again. I do not see how any person can help feeling stirred almost to tears when coming upon those lines with which we are all so well acquainted, but which never become commonplace:—

“I’m sorry that I spelled the word;
I hate to go above you;
Because”—the brown eyes lower fell—
“Because, you see, I love you.”

One can go back and read this poem by Whittier once a year to the end of one’s life, and each time receive greater pleasure from it. I feel the same about some of the poems of Clough.

Nevertheless, there is something more essential than sound, rhythm, or melody, than choice of words or suggestive sentiment. Poetry has all this, but it can be something more. It certainly does not exist for the purpose of giving new thoughts to the mind. Nevertheless, it does use ideas. A thought may also be the medium instead of a picture. A cluster of emotions can become formed around an idea, just as much as around the memory of actual experiences. But the thought or the idea used in poetry must not be new to us. It must be something with which we have been long familiar. It should be an idea which has been brought again and again to our attention at times when we were deeply moved. By some process, a cluster of feelings must have previously

gathered around the idea or thought, before it can have an influence upon us in poetry. Perhaps it may be introduced by the poet somewhat as a *leitmotif* is introduced in music by Wagner. We may be reading the poem and be deeply stirred by it without being definitely conscious on the instant what the *leitmotif* is, which has been introduced. The effect upon us comes by the train of associated feelings called forth. We stop and think for a moment, and then we recognize the idea which has been used by the poet.

There is a beautiful illustration of such a use of a great idea, in one of the little poems by Tennyson. It is a gem which many of us have committed to memory. It would have a beauty about it, even if we never appreciated the underlying thought which is being introduced by the poet. The new science or the new philosophy has given us a conception of a unity or interdependence pervading the universe, which could not have been appreciated by the poet or philosopher of antiquity. Nature is one. Nothing can exist by itself. The world is either a web or an organism. Each part belongs to every other part. "We are all members one of another." It is as true of the ray of light as of the human being. Philosophy has claimed the special privilege of using this idea. It seems almost too vast and profound to be a *leitmotif* in poetry. When it was thrown out as a metaphysical suggestion by Spinoza, there was something cold and dreary about it. People shrank from the idea as if it were icy. There was a heartlessness in the conception. But gradually all the new discoveries in nature or in human life have been connected with

this thought. It has been borne in upon us in a vast number of ways. A cluster of profound feelings has come to be gathered around it, in the consciousness of many persons. This great thought was all conveyed in those few lines —

“Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies ; —
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower — but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.”

This is what I should call the use of an *idea* in poetry. The power of those lines does not consist so much in the memories which they revive, in the words introduced, or in the rhythm. Words and rhythm are perfect, however. But a picture is thrown before the attention with a suggestion of a grand thought behind it. Many persons may only see in it a beautiful picture and take pleasure in reading it on that account. But others will have their deepest feelings awakened, because a *motif* has been introduced, which had already existed in their consciousness. They have been played upon by means of that grand idea. At first they may not have thought of this. They were merely conscious of being deeply moved. Yet the poem exerts its power by the same old effect of association. Instead of a memory, an idea is here used. If, however, the idea or thought had been new to them there would have been no cluster of emotions that could have been awakened. They would have been so preoccupied in trying to appreciate its meaning, that they would have had no feeling about it at all.

Poetry must use the *old* ideas. For that reason a new teaching cannot at first develop a poetry for itself. It must wait for a while until it has sunk deep into the human consciousness and been there long enough to have lost its novelty. Sometimes, just when a system of thought or teaching is on the verge of decline, a new poet appears, and makes what is true in that teaching immortal, while the husk of *system* withers away.

This is what has been done by such poets as Emerson, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Matthew Arnold for the philosophical idealism which had developed previously in Germany. When abstractions threatened to kill it, the poets saved it.

There is one special class of ideas which have always been used by the poets. I refer to the conceptions pertaining to religion. They are especially suited for that purpose, because they are never wholly new and also because they are so widespread if not universal. We have had them taught to us from earliest childhood. They belong to the childhood of the race. They may change, but they do so very slowly. These ideas are few. But they are elemental and fundamental. They can be used in a great many different ways; nevertheless, they are the same thoughts. A few grand conceptions form the whole basis of religion and of the literature of religion. It is for this reason that we can interpret the religious poetry of other races more satisfactorily than any other class of their poetry. It can never be exactly translated. Nevertheless, it need not be altogether strange to us; because we have been familiar with the same fundamental ideas in our

own language. There is nothing quite new in the thought. We cannot, of course, translate the poetry ; but we may be able to interpret the *poetic idea*, and so at times be able to enter even into the spirit of the religious literature of another language.

The Psalms of the Hebrews are an example of this kind. We certainly do not have an exact reproduction of their poetic form. That feature is altogether changed in the English version. The real poetry of the Hebrews can only be read, I fancy, by those who are acquainted with that language. But a few of the fundamental ideas which seem to have been the basis of religion everywhere, constitute the basis of the poetry of the Psalms. Thoughts about the "Infinite" and the "Eternal" call forth universal emotions. The introduction of these names as *poetic ideas*, repeated in a multitude of ways, has made that special literature immortal. It is bound to outlive every system of theology.

The idea of God, as a pure thought in the mind, may be an abstraction for science or philosophy. But it is something else as the centre of a cluster of religious emotions. We have been accustomed to pay reverence or bow the head when that name was mentioned. In this manner a feeling of reverence is usually awakened through a train of associations, as we pronounce the name. Poetry can, therefore, continue to use those grand conceptions of religion, whatever change may take place in the creed or system of metaphysics. The words "sacred" and "divine" are imperishable, because they form an essential part of religious poetry.

It is a striking fact that religious words retain a

power when used in poetry, which they may have partially lost when used in abstract thought or in systems of theology. There is something finite about the ideas of the deity, when those ideas have been elaborated into a complete system. But as poetic sentiments, they are different. We have associated the name of God with a mood of the mind. It stirs in us at once the feeling of reverence. When we pronounce that name in reciting a creed, it may not always stir the heart. We are liable to begin to think about the new science and the new philosophy. We are conscious of the changes which have taken place in the idea. We know that men look upon the universe differently. We are not perfectly sure whether all people are thinking about just the same idea of God. But when the name comes to us in poetry, when it is recognized, either as an idea or a word, in the writings of Goethe or Milton or Browning, we do not stop to analyze it. It impresses us then as being "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." We are inclined to assume that there has been a universal sentiment or conviction with regard to it. We have a certain common feeling of sympathy, whether meeting the idea in the Psalms of David, the Drama of Æschylus, or the lines of Emerson.

We have said that there are only a few fundamental ideas in religion. We are all more or less acquainted with those ideas, although oftentimes in different phraseology. They are a part of the atmosphere of our education. It may be well for me to give a special illustration of the use of one of those religious ideas in a truly great poem. I have in mind Browning's "Saul." This may be said to have

brought the idea of God "down to date." It is doubtful whether there is anything more sublime in the whole range of English literature than those lines

"I have gone the whole round of creation : I saw and I spoke!
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, received in my brain
And pronounced on the rest of His handwork—returned Him
again
His creation's approval or censure : I spoke as I saw.
I report as a man may of God's work—all's love, yet all's
law !"

The power in these lines comes from the fact that the poet has used those few ideas about which religious emotion has concentrated itself from the beginning of the history of the human race. Whenever a person ventures to do this, he is running a great risk. He may abuse his subject; he may wholly miss his mark. If he fails, he does more; he injures, rather than helps, the whole cause of religion. We all have these emotions and they deserve recognition. Yet few men know how to use them in poetry. It will not do to be careless with them. If we make them commonplace, we shall destroy their value. Inferior religious poetry is a form of profanity.

What I wish to call attention to in these lines of Browning, is not so much his use of the word "God." It is rather his manner of introducing another term which has not so old a history. In the language of science or philosophy it is cold. When we meet with it there, it would have no poetic effect upon us. Gradually, however, in other directions it is coming to gather around itself a certain cluster of feelings. We refer to the word "law" as used in that saying of Browning, "all's love, yet all's law." There is a

new kind of majesty which we are being led to attach to that word. We are associating it more and more with our sense of the sublime, such as we connect with the sky or Niagara. The word "order" is cold. Law has another aspect to it, possibly because of its double meaning. It applies not only to the methods pursued by Nature. It is also directly connected with human experiences. There is associated with the word, not only the idea of gravitation, but also the thought of the law of the family, the law of conscience, the law of the State, or the law of God.

Along with that word we have developed a train of associations connected with the times when we have been obliged to *submit and obey*. We join with it the emotions we have had while learning the lessons of obedience. The awful "Thou must" has come to associate itself with the idea of law. It revives the memory of the days when we had to surrender our caprices, to do what we did not want to do, in a word, to *obey*. It is connected with our deepest suffering, when we have been obliged to submit to the inevitable. It is a part of the sublime conception of *resignation*. All this stirs within us in repeating that special word. We have yielded to the majesty of law, either of the family, of the State, of the conscience, or of God. The memory of those experiences, the solemn feelings which have clustered around them, all stir again when we repeat those words of Browning, "all's love, yet all's law."

After having ventured to explain what appears to me to constitute the special qualities by which poetry exerts its influence upon us, I am led to turn to another aspect of the subject and to raise the question :

How should we read poetry and what poetry should we choose, in order that it may accomplish its highest purpose upon us and give us the truest satisfaction?

On this aspect of the subject I shall be going quite contrary to the opinions of a great many people. Nevertheless, I do not hesitate to say that in cultivating our taste for poetry we may often make a grave mistake if we adopt the ordinary custom and begin by reading the very greatest works in universal literature. There are persons who have studied Homer and Virgil, and may never have read one line of Longfellow or Wordsworth. It would not be surprising if there were others intimately acquainted with the great tragedy of "Hamlet," who may never have seen a single poem of Whittier or Tennyson. They might appeal for their authority to the latter poet himself. Was it not he who said, "We needs must love the highest when we see it"? Should that not be the basis of our love for every art; most of all, of our love for poetry? Should we look to Longfellow, when we might go to Homer and Sophocles, or to Virgil and Dante?

It may be said in reply: It will all depend on what we care for in turning to poetry, and on the amount of leisure we can give to it. I adhere to my first assertion: We do not read Virgil and Dante and Sophocles, when studying their writings in a translation. In the latter case they are not poets to us; they are simply figures in history. We should only be surveying the evolution of human thought as it displays itself by means of those great poets. There is every reason why we should be glad to do this, if we have the time for it. But that would not be

reading their poetry. They could enlighten us, give us new thoughts, and widen our horizon. But there is one influence which they cannot exert upon us by that means. They will not *inspire*. They do not fire the heart to new action. They are not liable to give us new motives or to alter the course of our lives.

It has struck me, for example, that the class of persons who devote themselves enthusiastically to the study of those early poets, are not often moved to do a great deal for the welfare of human society. It seems to be a purely intellectual form of pleasure which they derive from their reading. The cry of pain in the "Antigone" two thousand years ago, interests them far more than the undertones of pain and despair that may arise from living generations. They like to watch the picturesque drama of history. They enjoy reading Homer as a scientist takes pleasure in studying botany or political economy.

Yet that would not be reading poetry. Shakespeare and Longfellow, on the other hand, can alter the course of our lives. But I have never known one instance where a man was nerved to new energy or given a new life purpose by reading translations of Homer or Virgil, Racine or Æschylus. When a person can devote his whole life to one such literature, it is possible for him to become so imbued with its spirit that he may be stirred and influenced by its poets even if they are in another language; just as others can be influenced by the poets of our own day who write in the words we have been accustomed to since childhood. The inspiration in either case is always there. But we must somehow be able

to open the avenue for it in ourselves, if we are desirous of sharing it. I am certainly not anxious to depreciate the grandeur of the poetry in other languages, or the value of the greatest poets in our own language. But if we are occupied day by day with the business of the world, if only now and then a few moments are at our command for the pleasures of the art of poetry, in my opinion it would be far better for us to go first to a writer like Whittier rather than Shakespeare. We need a certain preparation even to be able to appreciate the great dramatist in our own language. He uses our speech, but is remote from us by several centuries. Again, I would say that if we have a little more leisure, but still are busy men preoccupied with other cares, it would be more worth our while to read Shakespeare or Goethe than Dante or Homer.

There is a marked difference between culture in poetry and the cultivation of the mind in the study of history, natural science, or philosophy. It is essential for the latter purpose that we become acquainted with a great many facts or be conversant with the varied conditions of society. In the special domain of the intellectual life it is necessary to know a great deal in order to know anything at all. We can only put knowledge of that kind into service, by being able to correlate it with other knowledge or information. But with poetry it depends not so much on the knowledge we bring, as on the *self* we present, the inner experiences we have had, and the memories we possess. These are the factors which determine our capacity for appreciating art. There must be a certain correspondence between ourselves and the

poem, if we are going to like it. It must speak our feelings and use our train of associations. This is why the lesser poets often appeal to us strongly. They are not so great as artists; but they are nearer to us because of the closer correspondence between their experience and ours. We recognize at once the mood which called forth one of their poems.

Furthermore, in reference to a fact or an idea, it is not necessary that we should study it more than once, in order thoroughly to grasp its significance. When we once perceive it and understand it, we possess it. It continues there for us to use or refer to at pleasure. When we have carefully read a treatise in science and fully entered into its meaning, there would not be very much value in reading it over again. It would be more worth our while to take up some other work and push our investigations further by means of other writers.

But in reference to poetry it is precisely the contrary. A cultivated taste in this art does not come so much by reading many poems at once, as by reading the same poem many times. One has not appreciated it merely because one understands it. It would be quite impossible for persons who could not give their whole lives to the study of literature, to be able to measure the genius of four such poets as Shakespeare, Goethe, Dante, and Homer. We certainly ought to know something about those men of genius. They were important as figures in history, and it is essential that we know about such figures. An educated person will be anxious to have some knowledge of them, just as he will care to acquaint himself with the leading discoveries of natural sci-

ence. But the question before us is different. The issue I raise is this: We may have relatively little time for poetry or any other art, being occupied for the most part with our daily work; if, under these circumstances, we still care for the pleasure and use which may come to us from this one form of literature, how should we proceed and where should we begin?

My answer would be: Begin with the home poets; with those who speak our language, have had some of our personal experiences, use words that we have used, grown up under the influences of ideas similar to those which have influenced us, and belong to the same country to which we belong. When we read them, we can give at once while we receive; as we could not do at first with Shakespeare or Homer.

What is more, as we have already said, if we are men kept busy with the cares of the world, and yet desire to have the most pleasure and value out of poetry, then read the same thing over and over again. The most perfect poem of consolation ever written is Emerson's "Threnody." Yet one does not feel its power until after reading it ten or twenty times. Enjoy a few things for all they are worth. If we must have a sense of shame at our lack of "culture," let it be because we are so well acquainted with many great poems or writers, and yet take no deep intense pleasure in any of them. It is the lack of heart which indicates lack of true culture. But if there are even a few really good poems that we read and thoroughly like, then we have already begun to have a cultivated taste in poetry. Such taste comes mainly by reading the same thing over and over.

We may peruse it for the first time and not really possess it at all. It will not be poetry to us, if it has given us only a bare thought. But when a line has really moved us, when it has kindled in us certain emotions so that we like to go back and see it again and read the whole poem where it was found, — then we have begun to possess that line of poetry.

There are certain poems which can only be thoroughly appreciated after being committed to memory. This is especially true of such works as the "Ode to the West Wind," or the "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" by Shelley.

If we come to like a play of Shakespeare, then read it twenty times over, provided we can take satisfaction in doing so. A poem to be enjoyed needs to be owned, just as a man owns a picture and keeps it hanging on his wall. There is no other way of deriving all the possible pleasure from it. We must go to it in different moods. We must see how it affects us when our philosophy of life has changed. It is strange to observe how a poem will survive as an influence upon us, in spite of all the transformation in our opinions. Religion may assume another aspect for us; life may have another meaning. Yet some of these poems we have loved so much will keep their same hold upon us. They appear to be independent of changes in science and philosophy. If they are true poetry, they speak for and utter the first and most elemental instincts. These do not change and are always demanding recognition.

An acquaintance showed me not long ago a thin, worn, vest-pocket edition of selected poems from Wordsworth. It was bound in flexible leather, so

as to be as durable as possible. He told me that he carried it about with him all the time. He always had it with him in his hand or in his pocket. He would take it out at the leisure moments on the street-car or when at the office desk, open it for an instant and catch a sentiment there. He is an instance of a person who knows the value of poetry. He may not be a widely read man even in that one art. It does not matter. He knows its value and gains what there is to be had from it. That is what I should call "culture" in poetry.

A chief reason why great men of letters do not appear nowadays, is that we are treating literature very much as the geologist treats the strata of the earth. We are using it for insight or knowledge, and not for inspiration. I do not remember that there was any developed "standard of criticism" just preceding the appearance of the great poets of bygone ages. Dante was not helped by that means; nor was Homer or Shakespeare. But, on the other hand, the people who lived in those days did love poetry. They appreciated genius, and so it was called into existence. It would be utterly inconceivable that a really great poet should arise at the present time, for the simple reason that the people in this age do not feel deeply or intensely about any *one thing*. They like to dissect and analyze; but they cannot truly enjoy. They are not capable of losing themselves in delight over a work of art, least of all over a great poem. We shall not have a new epoch of great writers, until in this or other countries we have been swept with a wave of intense emotion. If that occurrence takes place, it may crystallize into a new poetry.

It is by no means asserted that we should always, when reading poetry, be thinking about the higher content. Sometimes we can, as it were, bask in its beauty, as we bask in the sunlight, — just like it and take pleasure in it. There are persons who can sip a line of poetry as they sip delicate wine. That is harmless, although it may not be the highest form of appreciation. There is poetry which needs to be taken in this manner, and it is true and right for us to draw pleasure from it, although it may not be the greatest poetry. The beautiful always has something divine about it, in whatever form it appears. There are poems, for example, such as "Christabel" or the "Ancient Mariner" by Coleridge. They are not grand or sublime. Yet they are works of high art. Their power lies in the weird mystery of the thought, along with the exquisite beauty of the language. A person may find immense pleasure in reading these poems again and again. I think it would be worth a man's while to go over these two poems by Coleridge once every year in the springtime, when we are stirred by the solemn mystery of the change of seasons. These poems do not exactly make us think; but they charm us nevertheless. It is gratifying that we have so many different avenues by which we can receive impressions.

And yet poetry of this kind seems to be second-rate, compared with that of Wordsworth or Goethe or Shakespeare. There is something so much more impressive and lasting in a poem when it has a grand idea behind it. We can enjoy the music of language just the same. But it is so much greater as a work of genius when it is infused with a sub-

lime idea. What a contrast, for instance, there is between the "Ancient Mariner" of Coleridge and the "Prometheus Unbound" of Shelley. There is an equal beauty of speech and music of sound in both the poems. But in the composition of Shelley there is one of those elemental religious conceptions about which we have all had at one time or another some intense feeling. There is a thought running through this wonderful work, although it is not always forced upon the attention. A part of the time it is almost wholly out of sight. But it reappears again and again. All the music of verse appears to be centring around that one conception. It is the thought of the coming Triumph of the Right, the golden era of the future, when there shall be a universal Reign of Justice. What is there more exquisite or profound in the English language — uniting as it does the most perfect use of words and rhythm with a sublime idea — than the song in the "Prometheus Unbound" —

"We have passed Age's icy caves,
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,
And Youth's smooth ocean smiling to betray,
Beyond the glassy gulfs we flee,
Of Shadow-peopled infancy,
Through Death and Birth into a diviner day."

These lines kindle a sense of aspiration. They make us long to move onward ourselves toward the coming Reign of Justice. We are ready to plunge headlong into the arena of the world again, and do a larger share in helping society toward a Triumph of the Right. We have been kindled in soul by the music of these lines.

Shelley did not stop to think of his mission when he wrote that poem. The idea came as a spontaneous inspiration of his poetic genius. But when we read these lines they stir us to a sense of our mission.

It is something more than enthusiastic feeling that we care for in reading poetry; something more even than suggestive music or sentiment. A poem attains its greatest value when, while giving pleasurable feeling, suggesting beautiful thoughts, awakening old memories, it at the same time *nerves the spirit* or gives new energy to the will-power. If this takes place, then the poetry has entered into the texture of our lives. If it can lift us into the highest moods of feeling and thought, if it can take us out of ourselves, change us from what we have been in the past, put new ambition and new life into us; then it is noble poetry. It not only gives pleasure, but it can have a true ethical value.

To my mind this is the peculiar quality of the best work of William Wordsworth. He is my example of a genius that could produce the purest, most exquisite poetry and yet give it ethical power. After reading some of his lines we feel as if we should like to begin our lives over again. Sometimes we actually make the effort. They positively change our desires and ambitions. He has been able to make Nature not only please the eye and the mind, but also nerve the spirit. Instead of encouraging us merely to bask in the sunlight of its beauty, he has discovered a way of making that beauty alter the character of our actions. The melody, the sentiment, the thoughts in his verse, all blend together, until they become a part of our own consciousness. How often, for exam-

ple, many of us in the open air have recalled his song to the "Skylark." The soul within us seems to rise into another atmosphere while we repeat the lines. They awaken a forgotten idealism. As we say the words the very sinews of our being become more firm. We feel ourselves more ready to bear the burdens of life as we cry,

"There is a joy divine
In that song of thine."

That is something more than basking in the sunlight or receiving the beauty of nature into ourselves. We do not merely sip the delicate flavour of the song. The whole being within us responds to it. We give back again even more than we receive. We are inspired to new life, new energy, and new character by the lines.

What new impulses and ambitions, for example, have come to many a person from the poem entitled "The Present Crisis," by James Russell Lowell. It nerves the soul of man to work for the future. What an inspiration is given to every struggler when he repeats to himself those lines —

"Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne;
But that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own."

I shall not venture to give any interpretation to these lines. It is not necessary. But how they seem to hold a man firm when he is depressed or discouraged! How they strengthen the muscles of the soul when becoming relaxed! We cannot always be on the heights. Again and again we slip backward. Once

and again we seem just about to give up the aim. We say to ourselves: "It is not worth the while." And then we repeat those lines; and the energy comes back, the aim looms up once more before the vision, ambition revives, and we take up the battle anew. That poem nerves the spirit like the sayings of the Stoics. While it is pure poetry it has this additional quality. It puts us in touch with the leaders, the strugglers, the reformers of all past ages.

Shakespeare can do this, as well as Lowell or Whittier. Goethe can do this, as well as Tennyson or Mrs. Browning. The grandest, truest, noblest poetry should always do it. There is something lacking in ourselves if we cannot receive such an influence from it.

Idealism has been waning at the close of the nineteenth century. We have been growing appallingly practical. It may be a vain dream of mine; yet I cling tenaciously to the impression that a revival of our interest in poetry might bring back something of our lost Idealism.

X

METHODS FOR SPIRITUAL SELF- CULTURE

THE theme will sound remote and mystical—as if it pertained only to the “elect few,” in the style of the day, which is trying to invent or rediscover a religion such as only the “exclusive” nature can appreciate. Yet this is not what I have in mind at all. The old distinction in its way is simple and fundamental, between body, mind, and soul. We are all conscious of it, even if we cannot define it, and there is no reason to assume that it will ever be thrown aside or obliterated.

We all believe in soul—not the metaphysical “entity” which goes by that name, but the something in us which is not mind and which is not body, and which separates us from all other animate or inanimate existence that we have any knowledge of. It is not by our intellectual endowment that we claim superiority. We can think of the tiger as possessing *mind*, and yet still continuing to be a tiger. He could know how to submit, but not to obey. The law of the jungle might be something of which he could be well aware and to which he could surrender some of his impulses. But no tiger would be capable of saying, “Not my will, but thine, be done.” We

cannot conceive that he would ever knowingly and deliberately give up his life for the sake of a fellow-tiger.

We are more and more obliged to recognize that mind, in its incipient forms, is manifested low down in the animal world. Animals seem to have some knowledge of cause and effect, and are therefore able to judge and discriminate. Yet this does not alter our conviction that human beings have an endowment which marks them off from the whole animal kingdom. "Body" and "mind" do not express all that goes to make up a conscious self. There is another element besides,—the "self of one's many selves," if I may use such a peculiar expression. For want of a better name, we call it the soul or the spirit. Whatever this element is, however it may be defined or described, irrespective of its relationship to the rest of our being, apart from the whole question as to its origin or dependence on "matter," we never doubt that it is there.

It is of this something which we all feel, and which no one ever really denies, that I wish to speak. There is an objective and a subjective side to everything, an outer and an inner life, even to one's own consciousness. The sphere of the "world" and the sphere of the "spirit" have always been set over against each other. Furthermore, there is an almost universal consensus of opinion that the life of the soul is the *higher* life. Not only that, but if there is a Divine, we are all satisfied that this soul of ours is what puts us in contact with the Divine.

All the rituals and sacred music, the temples and cathedrals, religious services or ceremonies, may be

considered as having their main purpose in aiding to cultivate the soul.

In the life of the spirit what a man yearns for, is to be himself and yet to get away from himself. Unfortunately, however, much even of religious worship is nothing more than ecstatic delight in a person's own feelings and therefore does not serve such a purpose. The trouble, too, with much of the self-culture of every kind nowadays, is that it drives one still deeper in on one's self, — and thus, in another way, into the "life of the world."

It has sometimes struck me with trepidation that we might miss the one great chance given us by the new opportunities for culture in this century. A greater advance in acquiring mastery over nature has taken place in the last hundred years, than in all the previous hundreds of thousands in which we reckon up the story of the human race. Yet this advance may be transient and pass over and be forgotten, and we may lose the point of it all, unless we avail ourselves of it for the sake of higher forms of culture. We are putting it to "outside" uses, adding to the "objective" life, getting more of the "world," than ever before. In spite of all this extraordinary advance we are forced to think that men may have actually less *soul* now than they did in the days of Socrates.

You can cultivate both mind and body, and not at the same time cultivate the soul. You may have missed the self of the selves, neglected it and let it die away, while you are alive still in the mind and the body. The enthusiasm of the day is for the well-developed physique or the well-trained mind. Intel-

lectual culture is at its highest. Religious belief, too, is not wanting; in fact, it seems stronger than ever. Stupendous sums are being expended for the spread of these beliefs, greater in amount than perhaps at any time in the past. This is true also of educational institutions. The intellectual and the spiritual side is theoretically *believed in*. But when it comes to the practical lives and ambitions of the people, the materialistic side is in the ascendancy as probably only once or twice before in human history. This is the anomaly.

An impression exists that "evolution" will take care of this; that "progress" is inevitable in every sphere; that "Nature" will bring it out right. But is that true?

I must remind you of one very solemn fact. What has been millions on millions of years developing, is far more liable to be preserved or looked after through the mere laws of nature, than what is of recent appearance. The laws of your physical organism began eons ago, untold ages before the human race ever existed on the face of the earth. They had their start with the first protoplasm which marked the dawn of life. The same law which has evolved all animate or sentient existence will tend of itself to develop body and mind. Though you or I may neglect this phase, it will not be neglected by nature itself. The physical nature to which we belong will tend to take care of this form of culture; because the preservation of life or the struggle for existence requires it. One or two generations may ignore it and pay the penalty. But those races will survive which do not ignore it. You cannot undo in one

century the laws or tendencies which have required hundreds or thousands of centuries in which to become fixed or established.

But this something we call the soul or spirit, the thing which appears to separate our order from all other orders of existence, by which one man is even superior to another man, and by which instinctively we judge true superiority, — *this* is of late appearance. We cannot look back over hundreds of millions of years during which it was becoming fixed in its existence. It would seem to have been like a chance offshoot, one of those "spontaneous variations" talked about in biological science.

It is not true that this higher something in ourselves is essential in the struggle for existence. In fact, it is debatable whether the soul or spirit, as we now interpret it, really helps in the mere preservation of life. At times, as Huxley has intimated, this other peculiar something with which we are endowed, would seem to set us in opposition to the very laws of evolution. It encourages us to care for the weak and struggling, for those who may have great souls but are endowed with frail, unsubstantial bodies. Nature raises a voice of warning and says : " Stop right there ; this individual is not wanted, he will defeat my purposes ; he is unsuited to physical life." And yet we deny that very demand of Nature and set ourselves against it. Why ? Because this chance offshoot, this peculiar variation we call the soul or spirit, seems to us higher than body or mind, and because in such instances it may be so unusually developed that we think ourselves authorized to defy even the laws of nature in order to preserve it.

Now if this is true, we can see that this chance offshoot may survive or may die quite as *we* determine. Unless it is essential to physical existence, Nature will not be troubled about it, or do much of anything to save it or preserve it or develop it. The thought I wish to convey is that the preservation of the soul or spirit in the human race is going to depend on *us*. It is as if the Nature of Things when endowing the human race with new gifts and capacities had said: "Now look to it! You have self-consciousness and can know yourself and how to shape your destiny. Go your way. I take no further responsibility."

Ethical teaching is weighted with a consciousness of this responsibility for the welfare and destiny of the spiritual side of our nature. We are concerned not only with conduct, but with the soul whence conduct springs and on which it reacts. We are called upon to discover and develop methods for cultivating the spiritual self, the soul we all believe in when divested of its metaphysical trappings. We may not be perfectly sure of our course. Yet every thoughtful suggestion must have its value.

As one method for this spiritual self-culture, I should say that every one ought to have a "Bible." We mean this not quite as it is commonly understood, not as one book which a man solemnly believes in or to which he attaches a mysterious significance even if he seldom or never reads it. But he must have a literature which to him is "sacred." And it is especially for want of this that men lack "soul" at the present day, even those who devoutly believe in one such Bible. It need not be the same collection of literature for everybody. Quite the contrary! But

there must be some thoughts, some great utterances which strike us as divinely inspired; that is, which come to us as if from no one individual man or woman, through no one personal experience, but as if expressive of all the concentrated experience of the whole struggling spirit of mankind from the first appearance of the human race.

Every man should make for himself such a collection of sayings or thoughts which appeal to him in this way. He may gather them from everywhere; from Plato or Marcus Aurelius, from the "Path of Virtue" of the early Buddhists, from Shakespeare or Emerson, from Wordsworth or George Eliot, or from the Bible or the Bibles. In all the *older* literature there will be portions with the colouring of the age or the race so pronounced as to have little or no meaning for us to-day. It is seldom that we can find whole chapters which may be read continuously, as if everything they contained were inspired for all time. On the other hand, in such literature we may meet thoughts which affect us as if they were written yesterday. They seem to belong to no race, or age, or country. This is true of portions of the Book of Job, of the Psalms, of the Hebrew Prophetical writings, of the Greek Tragedies, and of parts of the opening chapters of the Buddhist Canon written at least two thousand or more years ago.

We have already suggested how such a collection of sayings might be made from the Stoics. One has to glean out the universal thoughts, and then to lose sight of what pertained to just that time or country. A book like "The Imitation of Christ," as was pointed out in a preceding lecture, is a perfect gold-

mine of such inspiration, and could be read with enthusiasm even by those who do not share the beliefs of Christianity. Each such volume is usually adapted to certain moods, because it emphasizes one special class of virtues.

From all this splendid collection of past literature each man can make his choice. He is to judge by the way it affects *him*. Some of it will be snatches of verse. Occasionally whole paragraphs or pages will be included. He will seldom know positively at the first reading whether anything should belong to his Sacred Scriptures. He has to wait and see whether it satisfies him, how it affects him on second or third perusal, what moods it awakens. I do not see, for instance, how any human being, no matter what his religion or philosophy, can help being inspired by parts of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Say over to yourself the words:—

“He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have wandered each in his own way and on him was laid the iniquity of us all. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. As one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. As a lamb that is led to the slaughter or as a sheep that before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. Truly he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed.”

One can repeat that every few days all his life and never tire of it. We can see why. It puts one into a certain mood. It starts the soul into life. One begins to think of all the vicarious suffering in the world, how men have to bear each other's burdens

and one man endure the penalty for the sins of another. We think of the whole past of the human race and what had to be undergone in order that we might be where we are at the present day. There is something unutterably sad and yet sublime about it. We see all mankind under this law of vicarious suffering and draw nearer than ever before, to our great human brotherhood. The meanest mortal that breathes, wears a new aspect to us as belonging to this suffering humanity.

Another such selection would be the passage about the "Sanctuary of Sorrows" and a number of similar passages from "Sartor Resartus." So, too, Wordsworth's lines about "Tintern Abbey" belong to my Bible, as well as lines from Shelley's "Adonais," Browning's "Saul," and from the poems of Emerson, — also one or two poems of Clough, and a few other selections mentioned in these lectures.

It does not matter where the selections came from. The author is of little consequence; because *inspired* thoughts really have no author, save the great universal human heart. If you want to have such literature possess this peculiar influence, disassociate it completely from the man who wrote it. Now and then in turning over the pages of a book you may have been for an instant thrilled by some one thought which has struck you there. These are ecstatic moments which one experiences occasionally and which one likes to linger or brood over. You have such experiences just because the thought struck you by itself and for a second it was as if *you* were inspired, as if the divine at that instant had spoken through you. When you truly have a Bible, that is the way

it will affect you. Its thoughts, its sayings, will move you, thrill you, strengthen you, nerve you to tread the pathway of your life; because it will seem much of the time as if you were the being through which they were being spoken, as if at that instant *you* were half-divine.

In the end you degrade the man who has uttered great thoughts by an exaggerated interest in his personality. You treat him by that means as if he were just *talking out of himself*. When a single thought is so sublime as to obliterate the man who says it, then is the man "inspired."

What we need is a literature which we can read a great many times without getting tired of it. We must know our Bible so well that in the crises or emergencies of life it will come back to help us and save us. We must have read it over and over again. It is one of the most disheartening facts of the day that we actually cannot get the time to go back to the truly great writings, because of the effort we must make to keep up with a certain class of transient literature which is constantly appearing. In this way we lose the finest elements of influence which can only come by repetition. Our culture therefore has become a "knowing about" things; but the knowledge does not become a part of our being. It is not *soul culture*; for, when it is of that kind, the thoughts which we meet with and which enrich the soul seem almost as if they had *begun* in us and *grown out* of us. We actually chafe or grow restless when we hear anything a second or a third time. The sense of recognition, the mere thought that we have heard it before, prevents us from being able to assimilate it anew.

Yet it is vital that we should deal with one small portion of the world's thought and fancy in just this way, make a Bible of it and feel as if our salvation depended on our knowing it well. There is a tradition that reading sacred literature is a form of worship. Can it be that the tradition has a truth in it? May this not apply even to the volume of Sacred Literature we select for ourselves? We are actually making *soul* by reading it; because by this means we are getting *away* from ourselves.

I plead for the use of a Bible even among people who no longer accept the traditional religion of their forefathers, but are claiming a new enlightenment. There is nothing irrational in having one's Sacred Book. We need to go back to the old custom of having one volume or collection of literature that can be endlessly read and re-read, as the Greeks had their "Homer," the Hebrews their "Moses and the Prophets," — only we should be able to include the inspiration of later times, which has developed through *our* race experiences and *our* national history. We have been suggesting a method by which each person could make this for himself, gleaning from devotional books, from the great writers with which he is acquainted, the sentences and passages which help to make him strong. He should keep them like chaplets of pearls, and they will cultivate and enrich the soul, be like jewels which shine with an ever-glowing light, and yet, while giving out that light, never losing any part of their lustre.

At the same time it should be added that for certain persons such a Bible as we have in mind, might consist of musical selections rather than of

literature. This would depend upon temperament. Yet music would never be quite adequate by itself. It needs to be supplemented by thought, as it tends to appeal too exclusively to the emotions.

I would say, again, if you wish to acquire culture in the spirit, you must get in touch with Nature. No two persons need experience this relationship in precisely the same way. It does not mean that you should necessarily be conscious of awe in the presence of a sunset. You may perhaps require to have some insight as to what a sunset means, before you can value its sublimity. It is not the blank stare of mind or heart in the presence of Nature that I have in mind; nor the sense of fear or terror in the presence of the *power* of Nature.

But Nature must have a meaning to you, and stir you in some form, if you wish to have the soul within you called forth and developed. You should put yourself somehow in contact with this influence until it begins to react upon you. Human life is not the only life. We may stand aloof by the fact of our superiority to the inanimate world. Yet we are also a part of it. We restrict the soul-life when somehow we do not get into some sort of conscious relationship with every form of existence to which we are in any degree whatsoever allied. The soul develops and expands by being put in touch with anything and everything to which it has any form of kinship.

I am not speaking of a simple knowledge of the secrets of Nature. You may be well instructed in the facts of science, in its mathematics, in its classifications; you may have penetrated far into the secrets of physical nature. All this is of no conse-

quence to the culture of soul or spirit unless somehow you have a *feeling* for this relationship.

Many a man will sigh regretfully over this aspect of soul-life. He would be only too glad to have it. He wants to get away from himself, to go out and mingle with Nature by the shores of the sea or on the mountain-tops. He may tell us that we are only tantalizing him, and reminding him of the soul he cannot have, because, alas! his life and circumstances compel him to be separated from Nature.

This must be admitted. The whole tendency of the day is to gather us into cities; and then we are conscious of being crowded. We want to get outside and to breathe the free, pure air. Beyond any doubt the new city life is stifling the love of Nature and by that means interfering with true spiritual culture. It is as if we actually saw a little too much of the human race to which we belong, as if we were crowded too closely together, jostled too intimately, until we lose our sense of awe for the fact of our human brotherhood.

But there is always a way out of what seems the inevitable. No situation is conceivable where a man cannot get, at least to some extent, in touch with the grandeur of Nature. He does not need the mountains or the sea. As he walks the streets at evening time, and comes out into an open square, he can look up at the sky and see the stars. It is one of the saddest features of city life that we almost forget that there is a sky overhead. Sometime when at rare intervals we go into the country, the expanse of the heavens and the array of stars almost take us by surprise.

You say there is no chance in the city to come in touch with the beauty, the glory, the majesty of Nature. Is that true? Stop for an instant as you are passing out from your door, and look at one of the forms of plant-life which decorate so many of our homes. One growing leaf, one single stem shooting up out of the earth with its roots penetrating the soil, can give you a sense of the relationship of which I am speaking. Take a leaf into your hand for an instant, touch it, look at it, think about it. It is Nature, as much as the boundless sea or the loftiest peaks of the Alps. I remind you of what we are told about Darwin, that sometimes when putting out his finger to touch a flower or a leaf he hesitated and shrank back with a certain delicacy, as if he were about to touch a beautiful *human* thing.

It is not necessary that you should wander in the "pathless woods" in order to have that feeling or show that sentiment. When holding that leaf in your hand for a passing instant, as you are on the way down in the morning to the daily treadmill of toil, say over to yourself a selection from your Bible, for instance those lines of Goethe:—

"In Being's floods, in Action's storm,
I walk and work, above, beneath,
Work and weave in endless motion!
Birth and Death,
An infinite ocean;
A seizing and giving
The fire of Living:
'Tis thus at the roaring Loom of Time I ply,
And weave for God the garment thou seest Him by."

Is not this communion with Nature? Has it not a "healing power" over you? As you repeat these

lines do you not feel your soul *growing*? We say now and then that one gets a "new self." Why not a "new soul"? Why not at such moments, when the whole being seems flooded or illumined with new light, why not think that we have, as it were, entered into closer relationship with the Soul of all Souls, with the invisible Something or Somebody from whence it all comes, and back to which it all goes again?

Every city which has a river flowing along its borders, offers an opportunity for mingling with Nature. In its way it is as grand as the mountains or the sea. All the great poets have been conscious of this, and have talked about it and mused over it. A river is as suggestive and inspiring to the soul as the unclouded sky of evening may be to a lonely traveller on a country road. It is Nature! We watch the turbid, muddy stream and follow it with our mind's eye in its sinuous course through cities and states, until it pours its waters into the great sea. What is it but a suggestion of time and eternity! Does it not soothe the soul just to think of it? Does it not remind us of the stream of our own life, wending its way through time to the ultimate Something to which all must go? Does it not suggest the relationship of the finite to the infinite; or make us think of the soul of man yearning to lose itself and be swallowed up in the Divine?

Then again, in order to cultivate the soul-life, I should say that it is necessary to put ourselves in contact with mystery; and it is perhaps in the presence of nature that we can most safely surrender ourselves to such an influence without being over-

whelmed by it. I am not willing to say that mystery has no place in spiritual self-culture, even to the being endowed with the majesty of *intellect*. There is no influence, it is true, which can be more injurious, or which can so readily check the true advance of the soul, when received in the wrong way. All depends on whether you can give yourself up to the thought of mystery without being overcome by it. One step too far, and your whole being may have gone backward and surrendered itself again to superstition! Yet though uttering a note of warning, I plead for a recognition of this influence.

My idea of mystery is that we come to a borderline beyond which we feel that we cannot go; while at the same time we are convinced that if we *could* get beyond it, we should find something more, something grander, than anything we know of now. On the other hand, we shall surrender ourselves to superstition if we half undertake to pass over the line and presume in part to see what is there, or to occupy ourselves with thinking and speculating about it until it comes to seem more real than the known ground whereon we stand. There is a way of making the "inscrutable" or the "beyond" appear more real than what is actually present before us; or of materializing the spiritual side of things until the truly spiritual has vanished from our conceptions altogether.

Human nature will always be fascinated by mystery; and we need not be ashamed of it, provided we only take care about the class of objects or events which affect us in that way. There is a great risk in the habit of overlooking natural causes and presuming to interpret facts or occurrences, by falling back

on the belief in "occult" influences. This does *not* cultivate the soul-life, but tends rather to reduce us to a still lower level. The disposition to be constantly occupying one's thoughts with the unexplainable in human life, often only weakens the intellect. A lofty spiritual life with a weak mind would be an impossibility. Hence there is no more death-dealing fad than the religious fad, because it is liable to lessen our confidence in intellect. The safeguard against this, is the study of physical science or its literature; for it trains and disciplines the judgment. The habit of being scrupulously accurate within the sphere of positive knowledge, will best preserve us from any injurious influence when we allow ourselves to be moved with awe in presence of the "Unknown." The man who reads Shelley should also read Darwin. Those who take delight in the profound speculations of Oriental mystics should steady their minds with the writings of Huxley or Helmholtz, else they may lose their minds altogether. Culture in thought or judgment must precede or accompany culture of soul. Nevertheless, I still believe that mystery has its true place in the life of the spirit, and that thinking about the "self of the selves" or of "absolute being," may help to develop spirituality.

Once again, I would suggest that if we wish to cultivate the soul or spirit we must have solitude. It is vitally necessary at times that we should be able to get away from every other being on the face of the earth. I know how contradictory this view will appear. You will tell me that such a method would drive us into ourselves all the more. But I doubt it. Is it not in

the presence of others that we are sometimes most liable to be conscious of ourselves, even of our smaller selves? It is when we are with the rest of mankind that we are tempted to pose, to play off on others something that we do not truly possess. But a man cannot very well pose before himself, certainly not for any length of time.

Moreover, when we are very much in contact with human life, when we are mingling with it, we are liable to become too conscious of its turbid side, or else drearily oppressed with its commonplace features. When we want to view anything well, we must stand off a little way and behold it in perspective. To see human life, and weigh it in all its many aspects, we need at times to go away and be as it were on a pinnacle, where we can take it all in with one sweeping glance. We need to ascend to the higher spiritual atmosphere of the self of the selves. Solitude can affect us somewhat as religious worship does. It can take us completely out of the consciousness of where we belong, away from all the ordinary selfish instincts by which we may be dominated. It can separate us for a while from our ambitions, from the craving for power. It can make us respect the soul itself, and by that means make us respect the soul in every man or woman who has ever lived.

This is the solitude I believe in. It does not mean a complete retirement from the world, a selfish seclusion or isolation by which one turns away from life in weary disgust. A man can do this, can go away by himself, just because he hates mankind and loves only his petty self. He can fancy that he is resting on the bosom of Nature, when he is not really in

touch or communion with Nature at all. But if taken in the true way, solitude will not so much remove us from our fellows, as intensify our care for them; only, it will tend to make us think of their higher interests, and quicken our regard for their spiritual natures. We shall become aware of the soul-side in people, even in those who most jar upon us or whom we most dislike or who seem most destitute of soul. Stand aloof by yourself in the spirit land, as it were, of your own self-consciousness, of your self of the selves, and you will get in touch with the spirit land of all human nature.

Too much solitude may be dangerous, just as too much of the sense of mystery may be. Yet something of it is essential to our advance in spiritual life. A man must go away where he can feel the mystery of his own being. Deeper natures have instinctively craved this solitude. They have required it as a means of equipping themselves for the work they have had to do in the world. Some of us may have been in the cell of Savonarola. The mention of his name will indicate my thought. *He* knew the value of *being alone*.

Yet I have not touched upon *the* true arena for spiritual self-culture. After all, not solitude, nor communion with Nature, nor the sense of mystery, nor collections of Sacred Literature, can give us the true culture of soul or spirit. In the end it is life itself, the daily struggle, the work we do, which should serve this purpose. Unless they can do this, there is something wrong with our life and work. Culture of any kind comes rather by what we do, by our practical activities, than by the acquisition of knowledge.

The experience we most try to elude or escape, the something we are all our lives seeking to avoid or shun, is just what most calls soul into existence. It is the struggle of practical life, which is the grindstone on which our spiritual self is shaped. The Sanctuary of Difficulty, with all that this implies, including defeat in our personal aims and ambitions, physical pain, disappointment in what we should like to see accomplished and cannot see realized, despondency over the dreams which never come true, —this is the sanctuary in which spirit or soul is best awakened. We try to avoid trial or struggle; but it is in just such experiences that we are taken up more and more into the life of the spirit. Nothing makes soul like "having things get in your way." In the effort to push them aside and conquer them, you conquer yourself and enter into the higher sphere to which yourself of the selves aspires.

I doubt whether a completely happy man would ever know what it was to live the life of the spirit. When you get what you do not want or do not get what you do want, then it is that you are led to ascend to new heights of your being or to strike into its deeper recesses. We conquer nature only to find that it may conquer us, unless somehow we can enter a sphere where the "tendencies of nature," as we term them, do not hold sway.

You cannot get this experience by reading of the difficulties and struggles of others. Literature will not give it to you. The poetry of all ages and all countries, with its expression of human woe, trouble, and defeat, can never take the place for you of going

through the struggle yourself. "Book-culture" is only a substitute.

We touch now close, very close, to the mystery of life. As religious natures, we aspire to rise above material or physical existence. We wish to enter into the realm of souls; and yet, on the other hand, I am obliged to say that it is in the arena of physical existence where, after all, the best and most complete soul-culture will be acquired. Active life in the world is the true nursery for spiritual culture. We must mix in the daily struggle; toil and labour with our fellows; go through their trials, their defeats, and their victories; jostle and be jostled, and so gradually develop the higher life at the same time. It will not do for us to retire and shun the practical life. We are put through that experience for a purpose.

Many a man comes home at the end of the day, tired with the treadmill of toil, eager to get away from it, wishing he had never to go back to it, anxious to put away all the memories of it. He changes his garment and would like to slip on another soul at the same time. You know what this implies, because almost every man has been through it at one time or another. This is the unfortunate side of our whole social order and of our present industrial system. Try as hard as he pleases, a man will find it difficult to enter with soul into his daily occupation. If there is anything which makes me inclined to the "Social Ideals" floating about in the minds of people nowadays, it is because they at least point to another system where this jar or contradiction would not exist; that is, where one's work would be the sphere to which the whole heart and being would go out, in

which one would take the keenest joy and satisfaction, and to which one would turn with ever new and greater delight.

Yet the plea I make is, that you should not be constantly thinking of getting away from your work, not be always dreaming of some other sphere where you could live the life of the spirit; but be thinking rather how to use that work day by day as a means for acquiring the soul-life you aspire to. In the ideal conditions, the arena where you could get the spiritual self-culture, would be the arena of action, of your life-work, the sphere where you would be performing your daily tasks.

The endowment of soul is potential rather than actual; we earn or acquire it through the life we lead or the effort we make. We get it, we keep it, we cultivate it and develop it *ourselves*. Is it possible that the answer to the query whether we shall awake again in a life beyond the grave, may depend upon *us*, upon the amount of soul we develop now in this life? I rest the subject there.

XI

MARRIAGE—IN THE LIGHT OF THE NEW IDEALISM

SHALL we preserve the institution? Shall we alter it? Shall we destroy it? What attitude shall the ethical idealist take concerning it?

The records of history and literature alike tell us only too plainly that marriage is not all poetry and romance, that it does not always harmonize with the dreams and aspirations of youth. On the other hand, the testimony of past human experience assures us that marriage is not necessarily always prose; it hints plainly that where the institution does show that character, it is because the people themselves at the outset were of a prosaic nature; it reminds us that such persons would have never been capable, under any conditions, of appreciating the real beauty and poetry of any sphere of human life.

Unfortunately, most people begin to think soberly and calmly about the subject, only when their thinking can be of little value in their present lives. It is the one domain where we are, least of all, willing to judge by the experiences of others. We form our opinions through our ideals and our reveries. Actual thinking would seem to have almost no influence in this one great sphere of life. At the age of twenty

we do not philosophize about love. When those advanced in life give us their views on the matter, we answer: "You do not know; it will be different with us." In later years, men and women begin to reflect, and they wish they could have had their acquired wisdom at the outset. They sigh over the future of the young, and they would like to advise them and warn them. They have constructed a philosophy of life out of their own experience. But they discover that the young do not want philosophy; and the story repeats itself over and over again. The young are determined to cling to their dreams and their reveries. They fancy that they can make life all poetry, and are confident that with *them* human experience can take a new start.

Marriage is a sphere where theory will never play a great rôle. We shall most of us begin to philosophize about it, when there is little use for our philosophy.

The majority of those who write about it, and debate over its success or its failure, are not judging from their knowledge of human history, nor from their analysis of human character, but from the joy or bitterness of their private experience. They do not speak for mankind. It must not be forgotten that, on this great theme, those who could give the best evidence are the silent, the people who refuse to say anything about it. If only we had a way of reading the hearts of such individuals, we could decide better as to the testimony of human experience on this subject.

The finer natures do not babble of their woes to the outside world. The more beautiful characters do

not talk much even of their happiness. The deepest experiences of joy and sorrow are those which remain unrecorded. The man or woman who can openly or freely narrate to the world his experience as to whether marriage is a failure, is not the man or woman whose opinion has the most value.

The opposition to the marriage institution may come most insidiously from those who hate all ideal conventionalities and restrictions; that is to say, from those who dislike obedience to any form of law. This is because they are through-and-through individualists. The plea such persons make is not a plea for mankind, not for the welfare of the human race in the future, but rather a plea for themselves and for their disposition always "to do exactly as they please."

It does not necessarily follow that people attack it from a bad instinct. Sometimes they may revolt against it because it has led to a repression of a natural and true individuality. The conventionalities or restrictions may have been so severe as to utterly stifle their higher natures. Here and there we may find persons who wish to have this institution changed or improved, because, out of the sorrow and bitterness of their own experience, they believe they have learned something for the good of humanity.

To a degree the whole subject has been connected with the problem of the emancipation of woman. If this century is marked by one feature more than by another, it is by the way woman has come forward and seemingly advanced in the process of evolution. It is, therefore, probably true that usage and conventionalities have not as yet been fully adjusted to this

advance, owing to the fact that the step forward has been so rapid. Customs and institutions change slowly. For the very reason that woman's life has formerly been so checked and limited, it was inevitable, after she had stepped forth with such unexpected powers, that she should revolt against many of the conventional restrictions of marriage.

I should like to speak a little on the question as to whether marriage is a failure; to give some reasons why men and women make a failure of marriage; and then to express some convictions as to the sacredness or want of sacredness in the institution itself.

You anticipate happiness in marriage. You expect that your dreams to some extent will be realized. Now we say to you, as a man, that if you have a wife and a home, and they do not realize your ideals; if her interests seem to lie elsewhere, if she is not kind and loving toward you, if the home is an unhappy home because of the wife; we say to you that *you yourself will be to blame*. On the other hand, we say to the wife: if you think that your dreams will come true when you marry, and then discover that your ideals are not at all realized, that the man neglects you, that he goes out into the world and seems to lose interest in your life and your happiness, that he does not seem to care for the home or for the life of the home; we say to you that *you yourself will be to blame*.

This will be denied on all hands by men and women. They will not admit it for a moment. They point to the sacrifices they have made, the efforts they have shown to be true and loyal to their homes.

I know that there are exceptions to the rule; and I also know that people usually like to think themselves as the exceptions. This is a weakness of human nature.

We admit the sacrifices, we recognize the efforts, and we acknowledge that there are instances where the rule does not apply. Nevertheless we adhere to the assertion: *you will be to blame*. This is the one great testimony of history. If you, as the woman, cannot make the home sufficiently attractive; if you cannot be sufficiently attractive yourself, to hold the husband there and keep him interested in you and your life, then the trouble lies with you and with the home you have made. You were thinking of yourself and about being made happy yourself; and you were not thinking about adjusting yourself to him so as to make him happy.

On the other hand, if you, the man, do not have a happy home, if the wife is not the wife you would like to have her be, if she gives you a cheerless hearth, if she seems more interested elsewhere than in yourself, we say to you again: you are to blame. You ought to have been thinking of her happiness and of giving her so much pleasure that she would have been eager to provide you with a cheerful hearth and a happy home. We ask you: What have you been to *her*? You were thinking of your happiness, of having a beautiful home for yourself; and you were not thinking of adjusting yourself to her needs and to her happiness.

Until this fundamental fact is realized, every marriage must be a partial failure. Three-quarters of the sorrow, bitterness, and disappointment which

come in married life, have occurred from just that one mistake of thinking the other to blame. You dreamed of the husband who would yield to *your* wishes; you dreamed of the wife who would follow *your* fancies. You reversed the whole normal process, you overthrew the very basis of the whole institution of marriage. And then you wonder why you have made a failure of it!

When you use that word "failure," we ask you: "failure along what line?" You may assert that it fails to accomplish the ends of one's being. If that be your attitude, then we shall say that Nature and its law, the law of human history, are against you. The trouble is with you, and not with the institution. But if you mean, on the other hand, failure in realizing the anticipations of early life, then there is a grave problem for discussion. A vast number of marriages are a partial failure in this regard. But it is open to discussion whether it is not well that people should *not* realize some of the anticipations connected with the institution. Now and then real life is far more beautiful, far more glorious, far more transcendent, than the wildest, most fantastic dreams of poetry.

We must remind you of another truth of almost universal experience. It is the testimony of literature, and of the past history of the human race, that after marriage has taken place the early feelings go through a certain peculiar change. Love may continue love; but it is not *exactly* the same kind of feeling it was at the outset. This is what the young, with their poetic instincts, will refuse to believe. Yet poetry itself agrees with my assertion.

The transition which takes place in the feelings of the heart after the first few years of married life, marks the crisis of the whole institution. Everything depends on what sentiment survives after that change has taken place. If only the young could always anticipate this transition, it might alter the whole tenor of their lives. But when the change comes, it gives them a shock. They do not understand it, either in themselves or in the others to whom they stand in this sacred relationship. It is the time when the feeling may pass into utter, commonplace prose—or, on the other hand, be transformed into a sentiment transcending in value all the poetic dreams of early life. With a great number of people it sinks into utter prose. This is partially owing to the circumstance that they do not anticipate the change, and so do not arrange their lives to meet it. It is a universal observation; the higher and more beautiful sentiments and feelings are not going to survive of themselves, unless we take care, even great care, about preserving them. But it is this singular change which has caused the word “disillusion” to be attached to the whole institution of love and marriage.

It is the easiest thing in the world for human nature, even though endowed with poetic instincts, quickly to drop back into the commonplace. We must undertake in advance to preserve the relationship sacred, if it is going to continue sacred. We must anticipate the transition and prepare for it. It is essential that we arrange our lives so as to preserve and perpetuate the poetry of the marriage institution.

You ask why a change does take place. We can only answer that it is in part by the very law of human nature itself. A great, new feature in human life enters later on, which concerned you only slightly at the beginning. It is implied in that solemn word: Care. The young are seldom troubled by it. The responsibilities of life are assumed by others older than themselves. Furthermore, as individuals they have only themselves to provide for. But when a man realizes that he has assumed the responsibilities of a home, another element enters into his existence. It sobers him. If he is not on his guard, it may destroy the poetry of his own nature, as well as overthrow the poetry of the whole marriage relationship.

Many an ideal in marriage has subsided, all owing to this new element of care and responsibility which comes to both man and woman in this new relationship. Many a man's dream of the beauty of married life has been partially, if not wholly, destroyed, because the woman's entire being later on was absorbed in the care of the young. On the other hand, many a woman has seen her ideals subside and her anticipations vanish, because the man has given his heart over to his business schemes. Neither of them anticipated this; they never would have believed it, if they had been warned of it. The change seemed to come all of itself and to come so gradually! At the outset they cared supremely for each other. It was the responsibilities of the relationship itself, which little by little drew off their attention and turned aside the direction of their devotion. At last when it was too late they discovered their mistake. The home they had both dreamed

of, somehow did not exist. Then they talk of "disillusion."

If there is one fact more established than another, by the entire story of human experience, it is that your marriage will have more to do than any other factor, in shaping the whole course of your life. According as you act in this matter, your life may be a success or a failure. Your whole future existence will be dominated by your action in this regard. No other step in life will be of so much consequence.

Men and women who know this fact, will nevertheless act in calm defiance of it; they go recklessly ahead, and enter thoughtlessly into the relationship. Then after it proves a failure, they turn and curse the Universe, or the God of the Universe. The importance of marriage is not something which people can discover only in later life; it is not the kind of knowledge which belongs only to the few. If we appreciate the significance of the relationship and prepare ourselves for it, we can make it a transcendent success. If we step into the relationship wildly, thoughtlessly, capriciously, it may end in failure. We can only say: Spare the Universe your curses; stop and think who was really to blame.

Many a man will marry early in life, take a beautiful woman into his home, assume all the responsibilities which are implied, and yet have made no provision for the future. From the very outset it becomes a desperate struggle just to keep alive. No wonder that sentiment dies away!

On the other hand, an opinion prevails that the whole sphere, end, and aim of woman's existence necessarily is marriage. That is the old, old theory.

We admit that if we had reached the millennium, if society were built on ideal conditions, then the normal condition would be marriage for all men and all women. Under such circumstances, it would be true that men and women could realize the ends of their being only by that means. It would be the normal, natural, ideal relationship.

But we are not at the millennium. We are dealing with a troublesome world, with conditions that go against our dreams and ideals; and I say that many a woman would far better realize the ends of her being standing by herself alone with her own sex.

Marriage is an ideal. But we cannot all share it. The one thing to remember is, that we can realize an ideal of the soul in one way, if not in another. Yet many a woman at the present day is wasting her life doing nothing, having no aims, no ambitions, just because of that prevalent notion that the only possible sphere for woman is marriage.

Here and there from our earliest days we give up our own wishes and lay aside our caprices, through love of others. But that was the surrender of a wish or a caprice. Marriage is the surrender of *self*. It is Nature's way of effectively annihilating the principle of individualism. There is something exquisitely beautiful in the way men and women give up for one another as they are drawn together. In those earlier stages of life, it would seem as if the whole self, or the entire individual being, passed out of existence in the effort on the part of each to please the other and to make the other happy. George Eliot very truly compares early love to a

kind of religious worship. It is because in both spheres one makes such a complete surrender of self as a mere *self*. There is such an utter forgetfulness of one's own being, of one's own interests, at the thought of the being and interests of another! Nature, by this means, has established the principle that man shall not "live unto himself," or "die unto himself." If he does so, he lives and dies as a brute.

Marriage means self-surrender. That is its fundamental basis. It implies that when you enter into that relationship you can never belong to yourself again, as may have been possible before. You have resigned, once for all, the privilege of thinking just about your own interests. At first you enter it impulsively, as an act of the heart. Then you do it by a solemn pledge. But from that moment the right to yourself as a self is gone. All life changes for you; all your plans for the future take on a different aspect. It is an alteration in your entire being. You will never again be the same unit or personality you were before. You do not necessarily have to plan for the change. Nature makes it for you. You alter in spite of yourself. You stand in an entirely different aspect toward yourself and toward human society; yes, toward the Universe and toward the Power at the centre of the Universe.

The second principle in marriage is that you can never have your own self back again. The step is for once and forever. This is what makes the tremendous solemnity of marriage. There is no step backward. You have entered into another

stage of being. The gates are closed behind you, and they will never be opened again. You may press against them as hard as you please. It will be of no avail. You cannot undo what has been done; you have entered into another realm of existence where you are subject to other laws. The surrender is a surrender *for life*.

This is what gives to marriage its sanctity and its grandeur. It is the most complete change which can take place in human life. It lifts you out of the thoughts of your own happiness, your own life, your own being. It is of a united life and united being that you have to think from that time onward. But more, it connects you with the whole human race, with the Universe and the laws of the Universe. You stand in a different relationship to all existence.

In so far as the self-surrender is an act of caprice or transient passion, it is not really a surrender of self at all. It is only a passing phase in the life of a person, which will soon die away and leave the natural selfishness to reassert itself. Then comes the melancholy reaction; then comes the disillusion. In so far as one, either man or woman, acts in the relationship as if it existed for the sake of one's self; to that extent the marriage will be a failure, — because the one supreme feature of it, the surrender of self, has not actually taken place.

Those people who make a failure of marriage are often the men and women who would make a failure of any relationship which required mutual sacrifice. Two beings, naturally selfish, who unite in that way, could never have a happy marriage; because the one essential feature of the relationship

must be unselfishness. When a man or woman argues that marriage must necessarily be a failure, it would seem to show from the outset that those very persons are themselves unworthy of marriage. They ought never to enter into the relationship. They would make any home wretched, because they would be thinking of their own freedom far more than of the happiness of the family. The person who constantly insists on the rights of his separate personality, would of course argue that marriage must be a failure; because his very nature, of itself, would make a failure of marriage. He lacks the first essential in this ideal relationship; that is, the willingness to surrender the self, in love and loyalty to the life of another.

Any human being who is not willing to make this surrender, to give up the caprice of the eye and caprice of the heart, in lifelong devotion to another, is wholly incapable of passing judgment on the worth or lack of worth in the marriage institution. It is only as we gradually rise out of brute selfishness, that we become capable of this higher relationship. It is only as a human being can suppress vain caprice and have a guiding motive through his whole life, that he can become worthy of marriage. The human race as yet is only partially worthy of this ideal institution; because the human race as yet has only partially evolved, or has developed merely on the outside.

The advanced thought of the day is in favour of weakening this tie. My attitude, therefore, seems reactionary. On this one subject I take my stand with the Roman Catholic Church. I am speaking as a "religious radical," connected with no church at

all, believing that ethical laws require no supernatural authority for their sanction. Yet, just because I take this attitude, for the very reason that I am convinced that ethical law has its basis in the Nature of Things, in human nature, in the whole course of history, I stand by the absolute sanctity of the marriage relationship. To my mind it is the most sacred institution in existence. I have no sympathy with those who would debate over it, question its worth, or talk of its failure. The sanctity of this institution is beyond debate and beyond discussion. The unholy hands of men and women may attack it. I want to keep clear of them.

We who are working for the amelioration of social conditions and the advancement of human society, who are striving for a more ideal theory of State or of nationality, who are struggling for a larger conception of ethical law, who are yearning for a broader and deeper religious spirit,—we above all others should take our stand in support of the sanctity of this relationship. Mankind, as it moves onward in civilization century after century, is destined to become more and more idealistic. But for that very reason the race of man more and more will tend to repudiate the reformer who undertakes to weaken the one tie by which civilization advances.

Marriage rests on its own basis; its sanction is in Nature or the law of Nature. It depends for its authority on no arbitrary will of God. Its principle is established apart from the authority of any Bible. Neither is it subject to the capricious will of organized society.

We read it as the law of history and we see it as

the law of Nature. According as the human race has recognized this law, to just that extent has it acquired civilization. We recognize it as the goal toward which mankind is pointing. We know that poor sin-stricken humanity is a long way from the ideal. We are conscious how often the hands of men have reached out to overthrow the sacredness of this relationship. But we know, by the law of Nature and the law of history, that if they succeed, the civilization of to-day will end in vapour and that the human race will be driven back to the conditions of prehistoric savagery. Human society cannot throw too much sacredness or solemnity into this relationship. It cannot make the tie too firm and binding. The whole civilization of the future depends on whether we do this more and more.

• We are pointing forward and not simply looking backward. We are suggesting what must be the ideal principle of marriage, if the human race is to advance ideally, and if civilization is to be preserved. You ask me; Should the State by its law enforce such a basis and ideal? That is another problem and involves other issues. We are speaking of what *ought to be* in marriage. The State may not be able under all conditions to compel the most ideal relationships. But the State does not determine ethical law. The standard in this other sphere should be on a far higher plane. Ethical law must always be in advance of custom or conventionality or government. It points out what we should *strive after*. We are suggesting, therefore, what the truly ideal natures will seek to make out of the marriage institution.

You may tell me that it is not just or right to control or determine a whole life by one single act; that it is not fair to sadden or injure an entire existence through one mistake. You may remind me of the unhappy marriages everywhere; you may tell me of the sorrow that exists from those relationships. We know of the sorrow, and see the unhappiness. But you forget that it is not the law of society or the State, which makes this law or establishes this principle. It rests in the Nature of Things. You may lay the blame there if you will. You may call it unjust. I am not prepared at this time to discuss that aspect of the subject. Nevertheless, it is true that in more than one way Nature often punishes or rewards a whole life, just on account of one single act. One mistake can wreck an entire existence.

Those who desire to treat the continuance or severance of this relationship as a matter of arbitrary choice, forget that they influence the whole course of civilization by what they do. When they deal triflingly with this institution, they not only injure themselves, but they strike a blow at all mankind. They are placing their own transient impulses or interests against the welfare of the whole human race. If all men had dealt in that way, there never would have been any civilization at all. The sacredness, the beauty, the *worth* of marriage, is affected for all future generations by the way one individual acts toward it. Yet many persons treat the matter as if it concerned only *themselves*.

A person cannot escape from the fact of his choice after he has made it. Nature says in plain language that civilization will depend on obedience to the

principle of marriage. It has written the fact as clear as the day, in the past records of human history. Men can see it, read it, if they will. The law is there; the fact is there. Nature itself throws around that relationship enough of solemnity. The blame is on us, if we fail to recognize it.

Marriage is a tie made not merely by the State, not even by the law of society. When you enter into that relationship, you surrender yourself to a higher law than your own will or the will of society. You can stay out of the relationship; but when you once enter it, you cannot untie the knot. The State itself cannot do it. It is recorded in the Nature of Things. The Universe itself has written it down. You think that you can change it, undo the act, untie the knot? We answer, that you think of doing what would be even beyond the omnipotence of God.

The whole future of the institution will depend on how the principle of self-surrender is understood. Poetry, in this aspect, has, to my mind, been most misleading. It has construed the blending of selves as meaning practically the destruction of individuality. Many a life has withered in the marriage relationship, all because of this one mistaken idea. Each instinctively tends to resent the assertion of independent individuality on the part of the other. I believe that to be a tremendous mistake.

The supreme fact is involved in the assertion, which has been made somewhere by another, that there is also a sex in the mind and character. It is because we forget this fact that a great deal of unhappiness occurs in the marriage relationship. The whole discussion about the equality of men and

women strikes me, for this reason, as rather meaningless. We can compare two beings in this regard, only if they are of the same kind. But men and women, by their very moral or spiritual structure, are different types of being. The striking fact about marriage is that it blends what is unlike. A woman's instinct and character are essentially unlike those of man. The affection between the soul of a man and the soul of a woman is something radically different from the affection between the souls of two men, or the souls of two women. "Friendship" in this regard is a meaningless phrase. Marriage is a blending of opposites.

But if we misapprehend this point, we shall lose half the beauty of the marriage relationship. It is a blending of selves, but not a destruction of individuality. You do not choose the other's tastes and interests and ambitions, nor are you expected to adopt those tastes and interests and ambitions for yourself. What you should do ideally is, at the same time to open your heart in sympathy towards the aims and ambitions of the other, so as to help and encourage the *other* in what he or she would like to become or accomplish.

Man and woman each expresses individuality in opposite ways. Their aims or purposes can never be exactly alike. The instincts themselves are different. Woman, as a rule, shows her peculiar character in art, or in the life of the home; man, on the other hand, expresses himself through practical life in the outside world. It is as natural for the one to care for the one, as for the other to care for the other. When you discourage or suppress that care in each

other, you only injure each other and destroy the beauty and poetry of your marriage relationship. If you propose to make the other merely submissive to your will, then you will have taken the one step by which effectively to crush the individuality of the other. When the man or the woman first begins to say to the other: *You must*,—then romance has reached the danger point and ideals are on the verge of extinction.

It comes very hard for many persons to appreciate the importance of preserving this independence of individuality in the marriage relationship. There is always more or less struggle against it. Many a man has withered in life or spirit, from the lack of more contact with the world. The wife did not think it just or fair that he should go where she could not go. She wanted that they should always be together. It seemed to her at first as if he ought to care only for her or only for the home.

On the other hand, many a wife has withered in character, just because the man was not willing to allow her to have free play in developing herself, or in having a beautiful home. It was enough for him to have a comfortable fireplace of an evening. Why should the wife care for more? *He* was satisfied. And yet he forgot that her whole being might centre in that home. That is where woman's individuality finds expression. Suppress it there, discourage it there, and the woman may become tame, ordinary, and commonplace.

Men often wonder why it is that the poetic side of woman subsides so rapidly after marriage. The very being who seemed to be made of feeling and poetry,

oftentimes becomes the opposite, and in later life has less feeling and poetry than the man himself. Yet the man is to blame; it is the kind of life he provides for the woman, which determines whether the finer sentiments or feelings shall survive in her. If he represses her individual character, if he makes her dependent on him for every item of expenditure, if he causes her life to be narrow in its sphere, if he wants her to gratify his whims and will not gratify hers, if he asks her to economize, while he spends as he pleases,—then he is taking the one method by which to destroy the very ideal he hopes to see in his wife. If the character he expected to appear in the woman does not show itself, he has himself to blame for it.

This right of individuality strikes me as a most essential feature in order to preserve an ideal in the marriage relationship. It is the greatest possible mistake to assume that you should try to have the same tastes, like the same books, do the same kind of work, have the same ideas, or think in the same way. Let each cultivate his or her own natural tastes or likings. The more separate the sphere of work may be, sometimes the more ideal may be the relationship. You can sympathize with the aims of another, without making them the aims for yourself. Surrender of self means sympathy, love, and loyalty; but it does not imply a destruction of individuality.

“Why does marriage so often become tame and commonplace?” We answer: In the first place, because the people who enter it may be commonplace people. Pearls cannot be made out of clay. “Why

is it that marriage so often ends in selfish irritation ? ” We answer : In the first place, because they are selfish people at the outset, who enter into the relationship. You ask : “ Why is it that marriage often develops into dislike or actual interest in some other outside person, ” — the most awful catastrophe of marriage ? We answer : In the first place, because the two people were at the very outset unworthy of the marriage relationship. You ask : “ Why is it that *one* of the individuals proves untrue or fails to become the ideal which was anticipated ? ” We answer : In the first place, because of the *other* and the lack of true surrender of self in the other.

The one great law is established by the experience of history : Where the self-surrender is not mutual, marriage will be a failure. Is it then a reflection on the institution ? No, we answer ; it is a reflection on the persons themselves. The people who debase the present system would debase any system. As a rule, the man who could not be true in one marriage, would be equally untrue in twenty. He has not known what it meant to control the caprice of the eye or the caprice of the heart ; because he has not known what it meant to make a real life-surrender of self. He himself is not capable of such an ideal ; he is not worthy of the marriage relationship.

Some years ago I had occasion to perform a marriage service. The privilege was given me of arranging the words to suit myself. I drafted a pledge or vow in accordance with what has been said in the present discourse. It begins with a few words as a solemn charge, then comes the pledge, and last the vow. It was as follows : —

You are to remember that the union you contemplate is something from which there is no step backward. What you do now, you do for life. It is to determine for you the course of your existence for all the rest of your days. What you are about to do, is the supreme act of self-surrender by which men and women confess that the only true existence is that in which they share their life and interests with the life and interests of their fellow-men. Henceforth you no longer belong to yourselves each as an individual. You may never think each of yourself alone. All that you have and all that you are, is now to be shared with another. We ask you, therefore, that you take this pledge with the consciousness of all its meaning. We charge you that you accept it as a promise with which your lives must in every detail be in accord, and which you are always implicitly and without question to obey.

We ask you, Do you take each other to be husband and wife? Will you cherish each the other as the one nearest and dearest to you of all persons on earth? Will you be loyal each to the other as the one only man and the one only woman of your choice? Will you care each for the other's interests and welfare, as you would for your own? Will you seek ever to share with the other what good may befall you, and help to bear what ills and burdens the other may have to endure? Will you endeavour each to aid the other in the aims of each other's life, in so far as those aims are worthy and just? Will you assist to make the other's life helpful to other men and women? Will you be patient and loving and true in the hour of trial and adversity? Will you each be faithful in rendering that service which should come from you in the needs of life in the home? Will you encourage each the other in what is right and true, and do what you can to hold each other back from evil and wrong? Will you strive, as you move on together, to develop in each other that higher and purer life in the soul, which the great minds of all ages have said to be what alone gives worth to all human effort? Will you watch and take care, as the hours go by, that your life together becomes closer and deeper and more precious? Will you see that it rises to a further and higher plane of mutual sympathy and trust with every passing season? Will you be all this each to the other and to each other

above all others? Will you do all this each for the other and for each other above all others; not only for to-day and for to-morrow, but throughout the years, until the one final severance which must come in all human relations?

You accept the pledge. But we call others to witness. We ask of you a promise binding and enduring as life itself. By the religious faith which you may cherish; by the memory of the dear ones whom you have loved and laid to their rest; by the friends you think of and care for; by the loved ones around you at this moment; by those who gave you birth; by those who may have cherished you in childhood and in youth; by what you most care for on earth; by what you most esteem in yourself; by that highest Sense of Duty which exacts unswerving obedience; by all these sacred ties and fellowships, we ask you that you keep this promise in taking each other for husband and wife.

You will understand from this service what attitude I, for one, am disposed to take, upon the great subject of marriage. From a purely rationalistic basis I believe in the indissoluble sanctity of this relationship.

It does not necessarily imply that the two persons under every possible condition ought to continue to live together in the same home. That would involve another problem. Disloyalty on the part of one may destroy the future possibility of the family. There might be conditions when they ought to separate. But that separation does not annul the fact that there has been a marriage relationship. The fact continues just the same. They had taken the vow. It was registered for eternity.

What we have to do is to take our stand once more on the original sanctity of the institution. We must go back behind the Church itself, to the great law of Nature. We must surround the institution with every possible solemnity; we must rest it, not on

the authority of Church or of society, but look for its basis in the Nature of Things. We must refuse to secularize it. We must make it even more solemn than it has been made by the Church. We must see in it the ideal surrender of self. We are to make it religious by connecting it with what is universal in religion. That is to say, we should associate it with the idea of Law and of reverence for the principles of Duty. When this is done, and done completely, we shall at last realize all the possible ideals in the Institution of Marriage.

XII

THE FAMILY—CAN ETHICS IMPROVE ON IT OR OFFER A SUBSTITUTE FOR IT?

THE Home is the original sanctuary. The Family is a traditional type consecrated by the Past. But men think less now of "traditions" and "sanctuaries." Is the Home or the Family as an institution destined to decline under the influence of the New Thought? Can the idealism of to-day develop anything superior as a substitute?

That depends. You may propose a substitute and think it is superior. Yet it may be only a mere dream of yours, because it does not accord with the ultimate laws or purposes in the Nature of Things.

We can only answer the query by comprehending what purpose the Family serves in the economy of spiritual nature. Whence came the respect for another form of superiority over against physical strength? What softens the "brute" in us and first makes us *men*? What civilizes the human race? Is it not this relationship between the weak and strong in the Family? Can the new ethical thought suggest a substitute?

You say from your general knowledge of a certain individual, "That man is a brute." But watch him standing over his invalid child. "No," you say,

"there is a *man* there after all." And so it is of the whole human race. You think of mankind as one great mass of selfish strugglers. Then again you look at the separate family-units, and you see the members of each unit sacrificing their interests for one another.

The Family is the original centre where the ethical spirit is nurtured, and that is why I believe in it.

We speak of the "self," the "home," and the "world." How many of us are clearly conscious of the distinctions between them? Yet we know that the chasm between the three institutions is enormous. We mean one thing by the home, and another when we speak of our city or our country. Within the domain of the family all conditions take on a peculiar significance. Responsibilities do not mean quite the same thing there; obligations have another significance; freedom itself assumes a peculiar qualification; affection or love has a different sense when applied to relationships between members of the home, and to relationships between people in the outside world.

You assert that an obligation is an obligation, a right is a right, and a privilege a privilege. How then can there be two unlike meanings for the same word? But think for a moment! You are a member of a home. You own something; it belongs to you; you may have earned it, and worked hard to secure it. You assert, "This is mine," and you are right in your assertion. But now stand before your father and mother, look into their faces, remember their lives, recall what you owe to them; then I ask you: Can you deliberately or defiantly at such a moment say, "This is mine"? Could you do it

with the same spirit in which you would face other men with that piece of property in your hands? Does ownership imply the same thing in the Family as in the outer world?

No; there is a subtle distinction in the relationships between members of the family and all other relationships. There can be no absolute "mine" and "thine" in the home. That would destroy the very possibility of the family. We do not imply that in the home there are no rights or privileges or distinctions of this kind at all. All we assert is that they are qualified in a peculiar manner.

The Family is the realm where the struggle for existence appears in a new form. It is there that we first become conscious of a higher law which separates us from all lower orders of existence, by establishing another and a superior principle over against the right of the strongest. This is one of the supremely beautiful features of the home life. Even in its cruder forms where civilization is less advanced, we see that the method for adjusting claims between different members of a family is on the principle "every one according to his needs." In our earliest years we are initiated into this higher principle, before we pass into the outer world and enter upon that struggle where the dominant law has usually been, "To every man according to what he can get." How willing men oftentimes are to sacrifice their own interests and relinquish what they would especially care for, in order to give a larger share to an invalid brother in the home! It strikes us as normal and natural, because we are educated in that principle from the outset.

I do not see how mankind would ever have come to recognize a higher law, if it had not been for the nurture of the home. When one member of the family shows peculiar gifts or capacities, we are even willing to stand aside and be partially ignored, so that the resources of the home may be concentrated on developing the one gifted member. Out in the world we are not ready to take that standpoint. But within the home we are initiated into it at the outset. If there were no original centre or sphere where we might gradually become accustomed to this other principle in our early life, it is doubtful whether we should ever acknowledge it or act upon it at all. But by this means it becomes the starting-point for higher distinctions and serves to develop the original ethical spirit.

Within this sphere we are led more and more to appreciate the significance of "the man within the man," and so to comprehend that all ideal relationships ultimately are between the higher selves, the inner subjective men, and not the mere physical beings struggling for existence as members of the animal kingdom. In the very hesitation we shall have, to say definitely to a member of the home, "This is mine," when realizing what we owe to one another, the new and higher spirit awakens, which we believe, in the far-distant future, is to triumph in some form everywhere. The home, therefore, is the one spot where ideals first dawn in our minds, and where we are led to think of a coming ideal Humanity. The distant social ideal can never be realized in the remote centuries hence, unless an esteem for its principles is first aroused and cultivated in these

original centres, where we are privileged to act by a different law than that by which we are controlled outside.

Yet the first great principle of family life goes even deeper than these distinctions as to "mine and thine."

We are all children of physical nature. In every one of us the brute is bound up together with the spirit. What is it that tames the brute in us as human beings? What induces us to relinquish the rights of superior strength? What leads us to recognize relationships on a higher plane? The home is the one sphere or domain where the weak and the strong live together without crushing or walking over one another.

The principles on which family life exist are all connected with the fact of mutual dependence, with a relationship between the weak and strong. This makes the beauty and the glory of "home" life. You may fancy that the dependence is one-sided. Yet think for a moment and you will see the mistake. You assume that it is a relationship between the young and the mature, with the dependence wholly on the part of the young. Yet I am inclined to believe it is even more the other way. You look upon yourself as the strong individual, the self-dependent member of the family. But one of the little ones belonging to you is stricken with illness. You tremble like a leaf, your happiness is gone, your interest in life weakens, because your whole being centres in the welfare of that child. Where is your self-dependence? Without knowing it or being conscious of it, you have been surrendering the right of

your superior strength. All that you most care for in life hangs on this frail, dependent creature who is unable to do anything for himself.

The great purpose which the Family and the home serve in developing civilization, pertains really to the influence on the mature rather than on the child. The brute may show something of fatherliness or motherliness towards the young. But the effect stops there. The softening, refining, elevating influence on the character from that relationship does not appear. But because we as men and women have another latent superiority in ourselves, we are changed and made over again by this relationship of dependence. We are refined and purified, yes, "civilized" by it. The spirituality was called forth in the human race through just that influence by which the strong, mature man was dependent for his happiness or satisfaction on the welfare of his child.

I am considering the problem of human evolution not simply in the individual, but in the human race; seeing how civilization has been called into being from this influence of the home. The Family has done it by civilizing the individual man. It has been a long, slow process. But we can trace the steps nevertheless.

It is the relationship between the strong and the weak which has first awakened a sense of true "spiritual" law. In so far as strength alone dominated, there was nothing but the brute. But when superiority of this kind began to lose prestige, through the influence exerted upon men by their care and tenderness for others physically weaker than themselves, then the higher "man within the man" appeared. It is

not, therefore, for the sake of the young only that we care especially to preserve the home or the Family as an institution. It is rather for what it accomplishes on the character of the mature man or woman. That is its sublime feature. Without such an influence we can readily see how quick would be the reversion to the original brute type.

But it is not only in the softening, refining influence which comes from this fact of dependence and care, that we see the value of the Family. The home was the original centre of worship. That is where we first truly see ourselves in the eyes of others and want to become what they think us to be or what they would like to have us be. It is within the family that hero- and heroine-worship first awakens. The effect is not so much on the one who reverences as on the one who is revered. It is strange and curious to observe how one's whole life is changed and one's whole character is elevated, through desiring to look well in the eyes of another for whom one cares a great deal. The influence is exerted whether one worships or is worshipped.

Many a man has hesitated and drawn back from a step that he was about to take, when he thought of the home and what they would think of him there, if he should do what he was contemplating. Probably no other extrinsic cause is more effective in holding him to higher purposes than the eye of a wife or child. A man will always be reluctant to step down from the position he has held in their reverence.

You might assume that this result could take place just as well in the outer world. You are thinking of the "sense of honour" and how much it may do in

keeping men along a straight pathway. But the trouble is, that in the outer world it is always possible for a man to *pose*. It is singular how willing many persons are, to be make-believes to people outside. They may be satisfied with what others think of them even if what the others think is not true. But a man shrinks from being a make-believe in the presence of any being whom he loves or cares for very much. He does not like to be a "sham" hero to his child.

It means a great deal more for one to be a hero within the family than out in the world. We are seen only occasionally or at special times by outside people. When looked at by them, we can, so to speak, put ourselves in shape to be seen. They can seldom come upon us suddenly. We can prepare ourselves for their presence or their scrutiny. But no living being was ever able to accomplish anything by undertaking to *pose* in the life of the family. The home kills all shams. We stand there for what we are. This hero-worship in the home is never subject to will or command. You cannot have it or get it by asking for it or demanding it. You do not make people respect you by merely asserting your authority, unless there is something in yourself which calls forth a respect for that authority. Many a home has had its beauty and poetry destroyed by such an effort, because the man by his nature or life could not command respect or affection through his real character, and tried to make up for it by the exercise of dictatorship.

When we study the effect of this hero-worship on the children, then we perceive clearly how much it may have to do in developing character. We may

not think about its effect on ourselves, but we can observe it quickly enough in the young. The hero-worship is instinctive.

It is the unconscious, rather than the conscious, worship which refines and develops human character. We choose our heroes by instinct, and then wish either to be like them or to cultivate those qualities which they would admire in us. That is the form of reverence which exerts positive effect on human life. We are influenced by men more than by their ideas; by what they do more than by what they say; by what they are more than by their appearance. In early life we get our inspiration from the people with whom we are most intimately associated.

The importance of this hero-worship in the Family is in that it nourishes individuality of character in the young. But such an agency can only be effectual when it is exerted day by day, month by month, and year by year until it becomes rooted in the character of the child. Worship at a distance does not control us in that way. It may stimulate the emotions and give a glow of excitement; but the inspiration comes from the constant presence of the idealized hero. No other human being in this regard, therefore, could ever quite take the place to the young of the father and mother.

We might, in fact, think that the effect would be just the contrary and lead the young to become simply "copies" of the man or woman they looked up to. But I believe that we should be mistaken there. The admiration of the "tribe" is for strong examples of the average *type*. A father, however,

likes to see a strong *personality* manifest itself in the young lives committed to his charge. An instinctive reverence for the parent, therefore, is more inclined to develop them along those lines where they are the strongest or most capable. It simply gives their original gifts or capacities a direction and concentration towards one aim, so that their strength shall not be dissipated on a variety of purposes.

It has been one of the most interesting discoveries of modern thought that individuality is a rather late appearance in the process of race evolution. One might fancy that this was the dominant characteristic of uncivilized people. Such men have impulsiveness or caprice, and a vast amount of it. But impulsiveness is animalism, not individualism. By the latter quality we imply that a character in early life is *set* along certain lines, so that all its efforts tend to be concentrated on a few fixed aims. Such a type will have distinctive features, so that the face will resemble no other face in the world. It is, therefore, only in the centres of highest civilization that you see these distinctive qualities in the human countenance. We all approve of such individuality and look upon it as a superior form of development, and wish to have it cultivated in the young.

The home life or the life of the Family, more than any other sphere, calls forth just such individuality. Will character develop without motives, without ambitions, without inspiration? Will it work itself out unless there is an ideal given it, unless there is some hero or heroine in whose eyes the child looks for approval or sympathy, or whom the child has been accustomed to obey? It is in the presence of such

superiority that he learns to check caprice or wild impulse and has the motive for acquiring self-control. The greatest number of examples of decisive individuality, among all the races of antiquity, appeared among the Romans. "Why?" Was it not because they made so much of the Family?

But we go back again to the aspect of family life which is always present,—the influence of this relationship on mature men and women. In ethical relationships I always am inclined to linger over the word "trust,"—not the confidence we have in another, or that another has in us, but the "trust" committed to our care. I think of life itself as a *trust*, as something for which we are responsible and for which we are to render an account in some shape or another. But what more than anything else impresses the human race with this feeling? Is it not the fact that the child is "entrusted" to the father and mother? There is something supremely solemn in this sentiment. Men do not own their children, but they are somehow responsible for them. They recognize this fact in the first place unconsciously, by the natural affection which they give to the young. But then when this natural affection comes before the mind and they are led to think about it, then there arises in them the conviction that they hold those lives as a "trust" in their care; and we see how the Nature of Things has utilized natural affection for that purpose, until the self-conscious being could comprehend himself and understand what those affections imply.

I should like to suggest an outline for a pledge on

the part of the father and mother in their relationship to the children at the time that the name is given to the child — although it is not submitted with the supposition that it will ever be used for such a purpose. Such an event should be one of the most solemn occurrences in the whole life of men and women. To the father and mother I would say:—

In the presence of this child we stand before the most solemn of all facts and the greatest of all mysteries, — the mystery of life itself. We cannot explain it. We do not know what it means. I cannot tell you why we are here. The mystery of our being is beyond our knowledge. It is the one ultimate reality. Life itself is a mystery that belongs to the inscrutable. And yet this child owes its life, its being, its existence, to you, the father and mother. You are responsible for it and you must accept that responsibility. This child is yours. What he may become will depend upon you. His future is in your hands. His life is in your charge and you hold the key to his destiny. You can develop him or injure him. You can call forth what is worst in his nature or what is best in his nature. We do not *ask* a consent from you for this pledge. You have no right to refuse it. You must make it in one way or another. It is no contract that you are just now entering into. The obligation was already there. You have only one course before you, — to accept it and to adjust your lives to it.

We say to you: Will you place the life and welfare of this child before your own life and your own welfare? Will you think about his future rather than about your own future? Will you plan for his life rather than lay plans for your own life? Will you provide this child with the means of subsistence until he is able to earn his own subsistence? Will you make his interests and his future subordinate to your aims and ambitions for yourself? Will you watch over him in sickness? Will you brood over him in health? Will you see that what is best in his nature is called forth and developed as far as lies in your power? Will you check what is evil in his nature? Will you guide his life and his aims toward what is *true* and *good*? Will

you give this child opportunity to develop himself, his capacities, his body, his mind, and his heart? Will you give him education and make it possible for him to win his own way in the world? Will you be to him what you want he himself should become; will you stand before him as the ideal you would like to see developed in your child? Will you think about his higher inner nature? Will you care to develop him in the soul? Do you stand ready even to sacrifice your life for the sake of this child? Will you guide him and yet will you give him freedom? Will you allow his own true nature to develop? Do you pledge yourself never to strike him in anger? Will you promise that if you make him obey, it will always be for his sake and not for your own sake? Will you be tender and loving to him when he is in the right? Will you be stern toward him when he is in the wrong? Will you be father and mother to him both when he is in the wrong and when he is in the right? Will you keep the welfare of this child in mind not only to-day or this year, but all through the years of his life and your life? Will you ever hold out to him the hand of the father and the mother? Will you do all that you can to aid this child in becoming a complete true man or woman? Will you make him obey, and yet so act that he shall love you while he obeys? Will you punish him so that he shall still love you though you punish him? Will you control his life in such a way that he shall still love you while you control him? Will you seek to make him strong in himself, true in himself, loyal in himself? Will you allow him to think in his own way, choose his own life-work, while you seek to educate the nature and character of the child? You have accepted the responsibility for this child's being. We ask you to accept the responsibility for what he is to become. And we tell you by the law of Nature and by the law of mankind you must accept this responsibility.

You have made the pledge, you give the promise; you say that you will do this for this child, that you will be all this to this child. But we wish you to remember it is a pledge you cannot withdraw from, for it was made before you accepted it. This child's future is in your hands. You can make his life or you can mar his life. As you hope for love from this child when you are old, you must keep this pledge when he is young. As

you sow, so shall you reap. If you sow in neglect, you will reap calamity. You have made a vow. It is registered beyond all recall. If you break it, nature will exact the penalty. You are not to think about yourself in keeping it. You are only to have one fact before you, and that is the responsibility for this child's life.

Commonly it is said that we should preserve the Family for the sake of the child. I should rather say that we should preserve it for the sake of its influence on the mature man and woman. It is doubtful even yet, whether mankind has begun to appreciate all the possibilities of home life. We are in a transitional age, with a little of life in the world, a little national life, a little community life, and a little home life. Not until the coming centuries will the human race see these various phases distinct and individualized so that each may accomplish its full purpose.

From the side of personal satisfaction the grandeur of the home is that it is one's "castle." It is the place where a man can retire from the world, retreat from the gaze of others and be to some extent shut off from intrusion. When once in this castle, he can close the gates and then "just be himself." Out in the world he can never quite be himself, but will always be adjusting his acts and countenance to the gaze of others. The real self is free only within the sanctuary of the home.

The Family is a far more ideal retreat from the world than the hermit's cell. You do not want to get away from *everybody*, in order to be yourself. If you make that effort and accomplish it, your best self may not appear at all. But what you crave for is a centre, a den or a castle where the people with whom

you are associated, know you and believe in you, and where your natural self is respected. As a real fact, it is only among those with whom we have been intimate for a great while, if not all our lives, that we can be our natural selves. We are conscious that such persons know us, that there is no use or need of posing in their presence. We are known to them from the inside, as far as we can be known in that way at all.

The pressure of commercial or public life nowadays deprives many a man of this opportunity. He knows little of the privileges of his own "castle." The "self within himself" has had no free play. He becomes a congeries of selves, according to the variety of relationships into which he is thrown in public life. All this will change by and by and as civilization advances, and the existence of the home more and more takes on its true aspect or character.

I have no anxiety over a possible "decline of the Family." The institution is destined to survive, because civilization depends upon it. Because it is a refining force for which there is no substitute, therefore it is securely established. Those nations and those races which preserve the most perfect home life, will triumph, and the other races will gradually die away.

No doubt, schemes of change will be proposed again and again in future times, as in the past they have been offered by deep and honest thinkers from Plato down to our own times. Now and then the plans may be tried. Children may be taken from the home and grouped together in large families constructed on some fanciful idea; educated on some

new plan, and thrown out into the world to show the possibilities of the new type. But such children will be imperfectly developed specimens of the human race and will be obliged to retire before the superior examples developed through the home life. The peculiar individuality among the young which genuine family life calls forth, on the one hand, and the refining, softening influence on the mature exerted by the relationship between the strong and the weak, — these of themselves are both so important in developing race civilization, that the family life which is the nursery for them is sure to triumph in the end.

That is what we mean when we say that an institution is rooted in the Nature of Things. When we assume that the germs of family life lie back in prehistoric ages, we do not necessarily imply that it was a prehistoric institution. The old, old habit of seeing a social ideal as having a concrete existence at the time of the first appearance of the human race on the earth, belongs now to the recognized class of "illusions." But the new doctrine of evolution which illumines for us the significance of those ideals, shows us that what we are *tending toward* grows out of the condition of the human race at the beginning.

If you undertake to introduce some new scheme or system, you may try it for a time. But it will not be perpetuated. It will seem as if a voice said to you: "Step aside, your plan is not wanted." You cannot overthrow an institution which has been developing for hundreds of thousands of years. You must work along the line suggested by Nature if you expect to accomplish anything at all.

This, I believe, is the task which Ethical Idealism

will have before it. We need to make it plain, just as with the marriage relationship, that family life as an institution is rooted in the Nature of Things and not simply dependent on a possibly arbitrary divine sanction. On the other hand, the sanction is truly divine in so far as all institutions of nature take us back to the original or ultimate source to which in certain moods we give the name Deity. But the institution is now once for all established. We may improve it although we cannot improve on it.

Instead of debating as to the perpetuity of the institution itself, what we need to do is to study all its grand possibilities. Ethics can improve it but suggest no true substitute for it.

XIII

LAW AND GOVERNMENT, AND WHY WE SHOULD REVERE THEM

I PUT to myself the question, Why do I believe in law and government, in the State and its authority? Whence comes the sanction for the law of the State; why should I obey it if I am disposed to defy it? What *right* has government to lay a command upon me or to forbid my doing anything that I please? I may submit because I *must*, or because there is a threat attached to the command. It may be only a choice of evils on my part. But had I the opportunity of acting in defiance of government, and yet of escaping any penalty for disobedience, what then should interfere?

It may be impossible for us any longer to assume that the State exists directly by the will of God, or that the law of the State is a divine law. We may no longer be able to associate with the decrees of government a supernatural sanction. All such notions have changed under the influence of the New Enlightenment. Whatever we may believe about deity, the conviction more and more prevails that the voice of government is the *voice of man*, that law, as we now understand it, is a human institution.

In whatever way divine authority may speak, now-

adays we shall be reluctant to assume that it is speaking through legislatures or parliaments.

What then is the ethical basis for the State and its laws, for government and its authority? Can the Sense of Duty be a substitute for the old theory of divine sanction? Does it tell us to obey law and government? Can it give the State a right to exist? Or shall we be reduced to the mere principle of "expediency"? We may submit to the decrees of government in fear of a penalty threatening our lives or our freedom. Can any other stronger motive be found?

I regard this as a momentous problem. The change which has taken place in men's views on this subject, is akin to the change coming about during the last century in reference to the authority of Conscience. It looked for a time as if the new thought of the day had undermined the authority of the Sense of Duty. As yet society has only partially recovered from the shock of the change. It seemed for a time as if the only substitute for that higher inner law was the rule of expediency. Already, however, we are recovering to some extent from the blow which seemed to strike at the authority of Conscience. Erelong it will have a sanction in the minds of the people, in some ways firmer and more deeply rooted than when it was supposed to rest wholly on Supernatural Will.

And so I am inclined to think it will be with our beliefs about the Law of the State. Although it seems at first to be something *on the outside*, more and more we shall come to recognize that it too also has a sanction from the inside. Even when the Sense

of Duty had ceased for me to rest on an extra-mundane authority, I still clung to the impression that I was to obey it. And in the same way I find myself still believing in government and law, still feeling a sense of reverence for the State as if it were something peculiarly sacred, although the notion of a supernatural sanction, a Divine Right, no longer dominates me.

My desire is, if possible, to explain why it is that I still have this same sense of reverence for law and government, for the State and its authority, in spite of the changes in religious belief, or the revolutionary attitude of the New Philosophy. It is my conviction that for this authority we find a still higher sanction in ethics, than was given to it by the systems of theology.

It is with government as with the Sense of Duty. At first we associate it with oppression and suppression. We look upon it as a check to individuality. It is a hindrance, and we do not like hindrances. The ambition of strong individuality, seemingly, is to get along without government.

We can readily see that many a person at first thought might quote the saying of Hamlet, "Thus Conscience doth make cowards of us all," and say that this applies equally to the authority of the State. They may fancy that it, too, is a kind of superstition, hindering the race of man from self-development or rapid advance in civilization. Anything that checks or suppresses the will strikes us at first as being against nature. What are we here for, if not for the sake of exerting our wills?

Does this imply that "law" necessarily means despotism? Is it something that we should shrink

from? Should we regard it as a "necessary evil"? Must we look upon it as a coercion that we submit to, although at the same time feeling ashamed of the fact that we do so?

Even if we overlook the seeming antagonism in which government places itself to our wishes, yet it is difficult for us to reverence the State for its own sake. We can *pay regard* only to that which is high or ideal, to something we can "look up to" as having an exalted character. We may stand in awe of sheer greatness; but when we revere anything, it must have the additional ethical quality of being great *and good*.

But the actual State to which we belong, or the government which rules over us, as we see it from day to day, is anything but ideal. It may be exactly what we do not approve of. We are always dissatisfied with it. Often we are quite ashamed of its acts. We may despise the legislatures which are supposed to represent us. The laws themselves may favour injustice. When we talk about our government, it is usually for the sake of blaming it. We seldom express enthusiasm for it. Sometimes we even look upon it with contempt.

The country of which we are citizens is usually so far behind our aspirations for it, that our hearts ache when we think about it. In fact, the institution we should be supposed to revere, is the one we most abuse and seem to despise.

Ask a man offhand what first occurs to his mind when thinking of the "State" or of "government." Will it come before him as an ideal Something which he is to love, or bow down to, or sacrifice his life for?

Will he think of what he owes to it; or of what he should do for his country? No, I venture to say that he associates it rather with "paying taxes," or with the police force. It is there to keep the peace, to save men from overreaching one another in their struggle for the means of subsistence. We associate government with dingy city halls, dreary law courts, wrangling legislators, factions or dissensions, the conflicts between opposing political parties, rivalries over leadership, abusive language, ambitious efforts on the part of one set of men to get the government on their side and make it serve their purposes. It all seems a dreary waste with little or nothing ennobling or inspiring about it.

Even when we dwell on the more ideal side, on the "love of country," we more often see it from its negative aspects. We associate it with warfare, with giving up our lives in defending its existence. When it is attacked from without, when its life is at stake, then we first begin to realize that we have a country. Only at such times is the heart moved with deep patriotic sentiment.

At ordinary moments to most persons the State is a chilly subject, an abstract entity, something for scholars to write about in books on Political Science. But it does not appeal to the heart. We can have a sense of love for "mankind," for our fellow-men, for our Common Brotherhood; but as for the "State," there is something cold about the very word.

I ask myself, if there were no warfare, no danger threatening us from the outside, no call to risk our lives on the battle-field, no civil strife; if men were gentle and peaceable, peace-loving and law-abiding—

under these circumstances would there be no State, no government, no law-making power? Has it been a Police Institution, as it were, to which in my illusion I have been paying regard? Has it been a mere "partnership," which in former times has called forth such devotion and self-sacrifice, and developed such ideal examples of loyalty? Can it be that the State will dissolve as the need for protection over life and property decreases, and the reign of peace becomes more abiding? For my own part, I do not believe it.

We must free ourselves from thinking of the State or government as if it were quite a separate or independent entity apart from ourselves. This is the illusion which dominates many a thoughtful mind at the present time, and is even more mischievous than the old illusion about Divine Right, as if the authority of the State existed by the direct will of God. It is the same tendency which in former times led men to draw the sharp line of demarkation between Conscience *and* self, soul *and* body, matter *and* spirit, God *and* nature—as if everything could be ranged clearly on one side or the other of such a line. This confusion of thinking makes confusion of conduct. Conscience is a part of the self. Matter and spirit are interwoven like possible phases of one substratum.

The State is not an entity separate from ourselves. Government is not something speaking to us only from the outside, necessarily commanding us to do something against our own will. We are a part of the State or of government, just as the government or State may be a part of ourselves.

The sharp distinction of the "individual *versus* the State" is most unfortunate.

The reaction from the old theory of absolute independent sovereignty on the part of one individual exercising authority by Divine Right, to the modern principle of "expediency,"—as if government were only a "necessary evil,"—has tended to be subversive of true Ethical Idealism. It has cut asunder what normally belonged together. The social consciousness is as real in its way as the individual consciousness. Society is as positive a fact as personality. If we check the advance or growth of the social consciousness, if we interfere with its expansion or enlargement, with its ethical development, by assuming that it is only an abstraction and that we as individuals are the only reality,—then we are checking the development not only of national life, but of our own true individuality.

The State is as natural as the Marriage Institution. It comes of itself as a development of human nature. If one State should dissolve, another would arise in its place. Men coalesce in this way and exert a certain sovereign control over one another and dominate the wills of individuals even *against* their wills, just as the impulses or motives in the human heart coalesce and find a government in the self, which makes them act together in harmony for certain ends.

I can see no point to the theory which is more or less prevalent nowadays, that the "impersonal coercion of nature" is freedom, while the coercion of men or society is slavery. As a matter of fact, in both these spheres there is freedom and coercion. We acknowledge the laws of nature, and yet we feel all

the while that within certain limitations we actually can control these laws and alter "nature." This may be bad metaphysics, but all the time we act as if we believed it nevertheless. In our dealings with the natural world there is a sphere of inevitable necessity, and also a sphere of freedom. And so it is likewise in the human world. If we do away with government, ere long we discover that custom takes the place of law; public opinion assumes an authority in the place of the sovereign will of an established government; and this authority is often more coercive than what we sometimes call a "despotism."

In America, for instance, it is often said that there is less actual freedom than in some of the countries of the Old World. We have less government and yet seem more under the control of external authority. We are coerced where no law may exist. The penalty for defying an established custom of society, is partial ostracism of the individual; and that may be as severe as any incarceration for having broken a law of the State. We cannot arbitrarily do away with this outside coercion, any more than we can arbitrarily establish a new form of it.

Such a thing as absolute freedom where two persons are working together, is altogether out of the question. We can only do without government by living apart from one another. The moment two men undertake to act together, they must begin to suppress some of their individual impulses. A dual consciousness establishes itself and exerts a certain degree of coercion. That coercion, as far as it goes, may be absolute. They must either keep step or separate. What is more, they will do this uncon-

sciously. It will come natural to them. In fact, they will discover ere long that the dual consciousness assists them in developing each his own individuality. Strong individuals are more often found in localities or communities where there is a good deal of government, rather than where there is little or none at all.

How do we account for the fact that the most striking feature or characteristic of strong individuality is *self-government*? A man of this type is constantly suppressing himself. His whole life seems to consist in checking minor impulses or caprices, so as to concentrate his aims on one or a few dominant ends. This means repression at every step of the way. Such a man acts as if he were being watched or guarded every instant by an immense police force, although the police force is all within himself. He is acting according to set rules. He punishes himself, as it were, if he oversteps the line he has marked out; he brings himself to judgment and exacts a certain penalty, in order to save himself from committing the same mistake at another time.

I believe in the ethical value of *law*, even though it seemingly comes from the outside, from a Sovereign State rather than from any one Self. It is by obedience to the law of conscience that man starts on the higher life. And it is by obedience to the law of the State, that society enters upon *its* higher life.

A man starts to do something and then stops. It would be against a resolution he has made. At the instant he draws back there begins within him a "self-reverence," because of his new "self-control." New life has awakened. He is establishing the au-

thority of the Higher Self. Let him give way, break his resolution, ignore it, defy it, — then he has weakened, he has committed sacrilege of a certain kind. The Nature of Things has been offended, as it were, and a penalty will be exacted. When it becomes of supreme consequence for him to exert self-control and keep a resolution he has made, it will be too late, he cannot do it.

So of the laws of government! They are like good resolutions of the State. If they are treated carelessly, then self-control is lessened. When it becomes of great moment to pass a law and make sure that it shall be enforced, we shall find that it is too late. The people have lost their solemn respect for law in itself, and will treat one law like another. There is a self-control and self-reverence for the State, as well as for the individual man.

We know that only the law-abiding nations become great nations, because they are capable of exhibiting a concentration of purpose. It means a self-control actuated by self-reverence on the part of the self of the State.

Sometimes it may be even better to obey a bad law than to defy it. Otherwise the respect for law becomes weakened; so that when a good law is established, men will have lost the capacity for surrendering to it or enforcing it.

It is a problem with which we are now being everywhere confronted. To what extent shall we obey a law when we do not approve of it? The inclination exists here and there among reformers to establish their measures by the use of force. "What if we do commit violence," they say, "it may be only

a necessary stepping-stone in the transition to the establishment of a higher system of laws !”

A number of reform movements of the last two or three centuries have been checked in their progress for years, just for the reason that the inclination on the part of the people was not suppressed, to carry through some of their measures by violence. The cause itself may have been just. But men, having once given rein to their impulses in that way, later on will be less disposed to subject themselves to new laws which they themselves consider desirable. They will also defy the rules which they first agreed to set over themselves, — just as they defied the will of the State or of the sovereign authority, because for the instant they felt that it was contrary to their own wills.

We the “reformers,” we who want *changes*, radical changes, we who are not satisfied, we, above all others, should foster reverence for the laws of the State. The man who respects the government under which he lives, the law of the State to which he belongs, will also make a sacrifice and control his impulses, in order to improve the State and its government. He will be the more capable of surrendering his private aims or caprices, for the sake of acting with others to help the cause of his class or to resist oppression.

What if the actual State to which we belong, or the government which now represents us, is altogether inferior to our ideals? What if we are at times ashamed of it? Does that overthrow its “sacred” character? The fact that we can feel a sense of shame over the condition of our country shows that we unconsciously attach to the institution itself

a peculiar ethical significance. If we had no share in it, if it was something quite on the outside, we should not be moved in that way. The sense of humiliation which may come over us at knowing that our State or government has been guilty of something unworthy of itself, points to a lurking conviction on our part that there is a self to the State just as to the individual, and that we belong to that Sovereign Self.

It is precisely with the country to which we belong, as with our individual selves. We know that we are unworthy of the ideals we cherish, and it makes us ashamed. What does self-contempt imply? Is there a man living who at one time or another in his life has escaped it, who at one time or another has not turned and heaped abusive language upon himself? Are we satisfied with our own lives? We look back upon the past, thinking over what we have done or left undone; and what a dreary waste it seems! We realize how inferior we are to the aspirations we have had for ourselves.

And yet we do not lose our sense of self-reverence. The greater we feel this, the greater, at the same time, may be the sense of self-contempt. Can we explain it? I hesitate to say. But we have the experience. We seem to revere the same thing that we despise.

And so it is with our conception of the State. We act on the conviction that there is for our nation or country a supreme something, a unity, a Sovereign Consciousness, not independent of us but a part of us, which has a certain right of authority over us. We revere while we despise this "self" of our country. And hence it is that we feel a sense of shame over

the bad conduct of our government, because we know that there is an ideal which the State itself should strive to realize *as a State*.

What if the law courts, the legislatures, are unsatisfactory? What if politics strike us as a dreary waste? Suppose that parliaments do favour injustice! What if party rivalries seem of more consequence to the citizen than the welfare of the whole country? Suppose that our city halls are sometimes a disgrace! Grant that the men whom we place in power may use their positions as a means for their own self-aggrandizement! Suppose that citizens do sell their votes! All this is sad enough and true enough. It makes us sick at heart over the welfare of our land.

But as for legislators, political parties, city halls, law courts, parliaments, citizens,—these do not of themselves wholly constitute the State.

It is all these, but a great deal more. They belong to the surface, the transient events or facts of the day. What takes place in your life in twelve hours, does not constitute the whole of *you*. Are you not something more than all the occurrences of any one day? The self in you includes all your past life, yes, I was going to say all the past lives that have gone before you. And this is true of the State as well. All the events or occurrences of any one day or year do not constitute its life, its Self. Its life, its Self, may go back hundreds of years. It had an existence long before we had consciousness. It has come into being by a long, slow process of growth and development. It is a vast network of law and custom reaching back to the prehistoric past.

There is always something which scientific analysis cannot touch. It may reduce a body to its elements, disclose the original constituents, — and yet there will be something left unexplained. What holds the parts together and gives them unity? Why do they coalesce? What is that unity? No answer is given.

We may take this consciousness of ours to pieces, as it were, scrutinize it, see everything that is there at any one instant. But does that explain it; have we by that means accounted for the *self*? Something baffles us there. What it is, we may not be able to say. Analysis does not shake my awe of self. Though at times I despise myself, yet the awe still remains.

Whence comes this self that we revere; what is its actual being; what causes in the Nature of Things led to its development? We do not know.

As to State or nationality, what if you resolve it into its constituent elements, what if all its life or activities lie bare before you for inspection, — have you by that means explained its being?

While I may despise this self of mine, all the more, at the same time, I am moved and inspired to improve it, elevate it, advance it, raise it to another superior level, because of the self-reverence which never quite fades away.

Just such a reverence, to my mind, should exist for the State or country to which we belong. The fact that it may be unworthy of itself, furnishes all the more incentive to its citizens to improve it, work for it, and elevate it.

I know that this will sound mystical. To some it will have no meaning. Those who can feel no *self*-

reverence, can feel no sense of reverence for State or nationality.

Yet this standpoint I am advocating, is really the average man's conviction when he comes to analyze it. In spite of all the unfavourable associations he has with his thought of the State, yet in his ordinary judgment and conduct he acts as though he attributed a self to that institution. Will a man risk his life for an abstraction, for a police system? Will he feel shame and humiliation over some "entity" apart from himself? In spite of himself he attaches a mystical significance to law and government, and to the authority whence they come. To be wholly indifferent to the welfare of the State will seem to him "against nature," showing that he somehow regards his country as having been instituted by the Nature of Things.

And I believe the average man's conviction is right. It is the other notion, dealing with "man *versus* the State" or treating government as a mere system of police or a business partnership, which is the "fanciful abstraction," the "philosopher's theory." The average man's conviction has profound significance *when once it is sifted down*.

It is apparent that in analyzing these everyday convictions of ours I am not using language in the strict and discriminating sense customary in scientific discussions. The terms "law," "government," "state," "society," "nation," would be introduced and guarded with much greater care, if this were a chapter in Political Science. But my purpose is mainly to justify what I regard as a general attitude of mind among ordinary people, — that of honest reverence

for the something which is popularly known as "government and its law," because this attitude has been undergoing a severe attack from various "theorists." To my mind the reverence I speak of, starts from our own consciousness and does not need to be fostered by any extraneous system of theology. It is natural to the Higher Self in each one of us, and should rather look for support to a true Ethical Idealism.

The doctrine of evolution, however, has served one great purpose in sanctioning the conviction that there is a certain continuous life to the State, and that as an institution it has a self of its own. We know now that there are laws or tendencies of growth and development in its life, and that to a large degree it is held fast in certain grooves by this means, in spite of anything we can do to the contrary. All that is implied in this general standpoint may not be apparent to the average man. He finds it hard to see why government may not be altered at once, and to any extent, if only the people choose to try it. Yet men discover after making the effort that they cannot always do it. An overwhelming majority may favour some radical change and enact laws to bring it about. By and by they find that the old features have returned, only in a new guise, and that not one-half of the anticipated reforms have been brought about.

We know how it is with ourselves when we resolve definitely to alter the course of our lives, and to pursue quite new methods in the future. There is no qualification about it. We are intensely in earnest. Yet a year hence we observe that we are still partially back in the old course. All that we have done in

the past has established certain tendencies in our natures, and the instant we are off our guard those tendencies reassert their authority.

The institution we have been describing is influenced in the same way. There too, extending over a period of hundreds, if not thousands of years, such tendencies have been developing in state or national life. It is the power of the dead over the living. We may protest against being controlled by a constitution adopted by our forefathers. Yet it is not that written document which controls us. We can change that; but in doing so we shall not necessarily effect the change we anticipate. The acts of our forefathers, in their capacity as citizens, gave a certain character to our political institutions; and we cannot altogether escape from that influence, any more than we can ever altogether shake off the influence of personal habits formed in our earlier life.

This may all be very trite. Yet we cannot emphasize it too often. It may, of course, at first seem most depressing. But, on the other hand, we must remember that it may have its inspiring aspects. In order to accomplish *anything*, we must feel that there is stability somewhere. If in social or political life all were in a process of change, we could achieve nothing. When we effect a reform measure that is really good, we want it to stay; and just because of this natural conservatism in the state-life, when once established we may hope that it *will* stay, and not be soon overthrown by some new agitation. There is undoubtedly a sphere of freedom here, just as there is within ourselves. The problem of Political Science should be to determine the extent of that

sphere, and so enable us to know what can and what cannot be accomplished by our efforts.

The fact that State or government cannot come into being at the arbitrary will of a few individuals, may possibly at first thought shake our pride.

It was an illusion prevailing for nearly three-quarters of a century that the American government had its origin through the efforts of a small number of men about a hundred years ago. We speak of our constitution as if it had been the creation of a few people at a given time.

And now that notion can no longer be held. The steps of development have been traced. We see that there is almost nothing new in the American constitution. Its features, for the most part, had been taking shape in the colonial governments. These colonial governments had their start in the original charters. And the features of these charters can be traced back over hundreds if not thousands of years.

This country of ours is a growth, almost as much as any of the great nations of Europe. It did not come into being through any convention or the adoption of any constitution. That was only one step in the slow process of development.

All this "depression" or "loss of pride" will pass away when we come to think more about the *positive* side of our conceptions of the State, and to see it as something more than an abstract entity that we are to risk our lives for when its existence is menaced. Not until the days of brute warfare are over, not until armies shall be a thing of the past and battle-fields shall have become only a memory, not until the

swords shall be beaten into ploughshares and the spears into pruning hooks,—not until then will fully dawn upon us all that is involved in the possibilities of State life.

Then we shall see that it is an institution which we have to live for rather than to die for. We shall awaken to the fact that it has a great and positive work to accomplish, which cannot be performed by ourselves in our individual capacity. It will not overthrow individuality, but will give us even greater opportunities for self-development or self-realization. It will open out new paths for the Ethical Ideal.

But beside the realization of this self of ours in our individual capacity, we shall see that there must also be a self-realization for the State or the Nation. It, too, will have a life of its own. What we cannot do in our private capacity, we shall undertake to accomplish through this relationship implied in law and government, or State and its authority.

Just what work the institution may have to perform, what its true functions are—that is another problem. I am only asserting its right to existence and explaining my reverence for it.

No mere Administrative Bureau can be a substitute for it; no transient partnership of independent wills can take the place of it; no association formed at a given time for certain purposes can answer the needs I am describing. The State is a living self and has that self to realize.

When once we can appreciate the significance of this institution from the positive standpoint, then we shall witness a new citizenship arising, with new ideals of Allegiance and Loyalty. Patriotic senti-

ment will not concern itself solely with "dying for one's country." Sometimes it is easier to die for a cause than to live for it. The strength of the new enthusiasm will turn in a practical direction as men begin to dream of all that the State can possibly accomplish.

It is true, we are told that the State is not only a hindrance to the development of individuality, but that it acts as a check to our sense of fellowship with mankind. It is said to be an obstacle to the development of a Universal Brotherhood. More than one idealist at the present time is denouncing the "love of country." We are assured that this is, after all, a narrow passion; that it limits the range of our interests, interferes with love for our fellow-men; that it hems in our affections or interests by an arbitrary line. Should not ethics make a supreme effort to do away with such arbitrary distinctions?

There may be a point to this. And yet we shall be overlooking one important fact. Man cannot spring on the instant from being naturally devoted to himself and his own interests, to the standpoint of caring for a Universal Brotherhood. The original selfishness of human nature is not conquered in a day or a century or a thousand years. This world is not only a nursery for the development of a high, complete individuality in *persons*, but also a nursery for developing a high social consciousness or a highly organized society. There is something grand in complete *common* life, just as there may be something grand in complete individual life.

As strong individuality in citizens is essential to a strong nation, so a highly developed individuality

among nations is essential to a complete humanity. The family is a sacred institution by itself; but in the process of evolution it is the stepping-stone to the development of the State. So, too, the State is a sacred institution by itself, but also in the process of evolution it is an essential stepping-stone to an organized universal Human Brotherhood. Each institution has a significance in itself and is of service also for the higher or larger institutions including it.

My plea may seem like an enthusiastic appeal for the importance of the State over against the individual. And yet that surely is not my meaning. What enthusiasm I have, centres rather on the ideal of a complete, individualized personality. That to me comes first in importance. A perfectly developed man would be something grander and more inspiring to me, than the most completely developed State or organized Human Society. And yet I recognize that these *outer* institutions, as we think of them, each in its way has its grandeur; that they exist each by its own right and that each at the same time helps to the upbuilding of the other. Family, State, Humanity, and the Individual,—these are all, to my mind, sacred institutions. Though I care supremely about high, noble individuality, I know that it cannot come of itself unless we revere these other institutions as well.

My appeal is rather for a recognition of the value of law. And with this must go a plea for recognition of the sovereign self, the State or government, whence that law proceeds. The Higher Ethical Self in each one of us furnishes the sanction we have been seeking for, and gives the State its right to exist.

XIV

SOCIAL IDEALS AND WHAT THEY SIGNIFY TO THE ETHICAL IDEALIST

SHALL we work for them and help to realize them? Shall we ignore them? Or shall we antagonize them?

It makes one's heart ache to see the amount of restless agitation in the cause of "justice" now going on, and yet to realize how little is actually accomplished. There are thoughtful people who are fairly seething with the desire to improve the conditions of their fellow-men, or to realize some Social Ideal. They work oftentimes with the ardour of the religious enthusiast, as if burning with a consuming fire in devotion to such a cause. They remind us sometimes of the spirit displayed in early ages when men were trying to spread a new religion.

What does it all amount to? Is it at bottom a struggle for bread, for wages, for a greater share of the wealth which is being produced? Is it mainly an ambition "to get something more from other men"? When people study one or another of these social ideals, why do they often become so enthusiastic over them? I have seen individuals who were making a positive "Bible" of such literature. They

will quote from those writings as others do from Sacred Scriptures.

It is my conviction that we should deal with this subject precisely as we have done with the hopes and beliefs belonging strictly to the sphere of religion. The main point to be considered at the outset is, not as to the meaning of the doctrines or theories, but as to what they signify as stages in the progress of the race, and why people believe in them and work for them. When a new tendency is manifest, the first thing to be done on the part of the idealist is not to attack it or encourage it, but to *study* it — most of all to get at the motives of the human heart which may have so much to do in calling it forth and winning support for it.

You may read this literature, analyze the plans which are suggested, make a logical dissection of the proposals, and think of them after all as “visionary schemes.” Yet whatever they are, there must be something in the background which gives them a hold on the mass of the people. Behind the programme is a restless yearning which must be accounted for. A true way to comprehend the ethical spirit which dominates in human nature at the present time is to study these schemes and plans which appeal so warmly to the populace. It is an old adage: What men like or approve of, shows what they are. When you fancy you are attacking some one feature of the ideals, your effort may be actually of no avail, although you may be quite consistent in your position. The trouble will be that you are not attacking the fundamental sentiments which lead men to adopt such a standpoint.

The phrase is ambiguous, but not without its meaning. By "social ideals" we mean all those plans to improve the condition of men by altering the *external* basis or structure of organized society. Much of the reform effort of to-day is of this type. Nearly every one who is working in the cause of reform has, lurking away somewhere in his consciousness, a dream or vision of an ideal State, or a new industrial system, which he would like to see realized. It may furnish him with inspiration and give him the motive to work. But something of the kind is quite sure to be there.

Some of these schemes are mainly political in character, others industrial, and others social. There is a long list of them, beginning with Plato's "Republic," and then later on including the "Utopia" of Sir Thomas Moore, Campanella's "City of the Sun," the "Social Contract" of Rousseau, and finally the socialistic schemes of Bellamy, William Morris, Carl Marx, and a host of others; or the more individualistic proposals of a Henry George or a Herbert Spencer. It will naturally shock a thoughtful man to hear all these names pronounced in the same breath. But these modern advocates represent widespread tendencies, whereas in earlier epochs each writer spoke for one person only. None of these later men in their scope of mind or depth of insight are for a moment to be compared with the one great philosopher of Athens who taught in the Groves of the Academy. But these new teachings have even greater significance to us at the present moment, because of what they signify in reference to the tendencies of the day.

Plato was not talking to the populace. He wrote

his "Republic" as a means for introducing and explaining his theory of ideas. His work was a treatise in philosophy, and never would appeal to any class of minds except those who study such problems from the metaphysical side. The "Utopia" of Sir Thomas Moore was first written in Latin. It, too, was meant for the student or the scholar.

But with the Social Ideals of to-day it is otherwise. They appeal to the "masses." They have struck the populace, and point to an extensive movement now going on within the consciousness of the "people." The student widely acquainted with literature is reluctant to give them serious attention. He will read Plato with enthusiasm, and may be even disposed to study Sir Thomas Moore. But these later theories have little or nothing to teach him. He sees that they are often lacking in the scientific spirit or wanting in philosophy, and that sometimes they read more like wild, incoherent cries, than sober, well-considered schemes worthy of being given a trial.

But to the Ethical Idealist they have another meaning. Just because they are confused cries, collections of vague sentiments, or a mass of "wants," for the very reason that they speak for the restless agitation now going on, he desires to get into closer touch with them and read between the lines. He recognizes that the future of our institutions depends on what becomes fixed in the hearts of the "masses." As one with idealistic leanings, it has taken me a great while to discover how to *get at* such theories; how to argue or discuss with the men who advocate them. There will always be a few who talk from their heads, but the majority talk from their hearts.

Slowly it became apparent to me what I was dealing with. I found that I was speaking oftentimes with men who had made a positive religion of those ideals. When I began to address them in another way, and asked them why they cared so much for this or that scheme, and what they hoped it would accomplish, then the ulterior motives became visible, and I could appreciate what was back of their thought. Then it was possible for me to see more and more what down in their hearts they *actually* wanted. Again and again I had asked myself why I felt so much sympathy for the men who were advocating these ideals, while I could not agree with their views. At last it was possible for me to see the ground of my sympathy.

In order to comprehend the true significance of this agitation now going on, it is essential that we should stand, as it were, at a spiritual distance from all the scramble, the strikes and the lockouts, the boycotts, the turmoil and violence, the accusations and recriminations, and to see what it implies *as a whole*, what it means as a historic wave-movement.

Suppose you undertake to work in a cause of this kind, and strive to accomplish something definite. You enter as an idealist, expecting to find men throwing all their energies, without thought of self, into one Sacred Purpose. You meet with selfishness, petty rivalries, personal ambitions. A materialistic side confronts you in a way that you had never anticipated. The men you are working for may appear exceedingly "human," and you see that you had been "idealizing" them. The "man within the man," that you believe in so fervently, may actually be there in each instance; but he is hidden out of sight a great

deal of the time, and the "outer man" is facing you all the while. Many an individual has made the effort, and become weary and disheartened because of the discovery.

An artisan said to me one time, after working with intense ardour for a number of years in such a cause, that he was "tired," that the working class to which he belonged "was not worth trying to help." It was a most depressing statement coming from one who had devoted himself so energetically and enthusiastically to such a purpose. Yet I could understand it. He had become so absorbed in the details of his practical efforts, so completely lost in the one special thing he was struggling for at the time, that he was unable to stand off as it were in the upper sphere of the mind and to see what all that effort implied when separated from its materialistic aspect. It all seemed to him like a scramble for *self*.

We see the assertion of the old law: History moves one inch at a time; and what is more, in its movements it carries along a great deal of froth or sediment which humanity might well wish could be left behind. But what really *causes* the advance is the element of idealism which is always there, though mixed with callous selfishness or shameless self-assertion. The greater the amount of the latter element, the more sluggish is the advance.

Many a great social movement begins, for instance, simply as a class measure, with a determination on the part of a certain body of men to get something more for *themselves*. There will always be a materialistic side to all such efforts, because human nature has the two sides in itself. Yet, later on,

such movements at times are lifted above the mere thought of *class*. It was a stupendous step when the social agitator was led to say we are all "victims of a *system*." At the outset he would have spoken differently. The agitation begins because one body of men feel themselves abused or wronged, and demand a quick and speedy remedy. But as they go on they see deeper and further. They perceive that one set of abuses cannot be remedied without remedying another set for another class of people at the same time. It dawns upon them that what they must strive for is a social ideal which shall include all classes.

I believe that many a man has thought about this subject until his head began to swim — trying to decide how much of this agitation was honest and genuine, how much came from a real yearning after the welfare of one's fellows, how much of it was based on convictions of justice. The materialistic side is inevitable; but it is most depressing. It saps the enthusiasm of the idealist and weakens his ardour, until he is inclined to wonder what the whole struggle amounts to. From the outside he sees it as an effort to establish justice. From the inside he discovers that a great deal of it is a scramble to get "even" with other men.

It is difficult and painful enough to discuss the subject even with thoughtful men. People of wealth, as a rule, do not care to hear the story. But it is even more embarrassing to speak plainly to the wage-earning class. The message we may have to give them is not palatable. We can remind the rich of their responsibility. But we have to say to the mechanic in equally positive words: "You, too, may

be looking for the cause of the evil in the wrong direction." This element of society inclines to the conviction that environment makes the man, and therefore that all depends on changing outside conditions. It is felt that if we could only get the right kind of State or the right industrial system, then human nature would be all right. As an individual once said to me, "There is no use talking about ethics when wages are so low." We as ethical teachers, on the other hand, must call the attention of those persons to the fact that outward conditions also depend largely on inward character. I was asked once at a meeting, "Do you not think that the selfishness of to-day is due to the present commercial system?" I very much wanted to answer "Yes," for the sake of showing my sympathy. But as a religious teacher I had to give him the unavoidable reply, "No; the evil in the present commercial system is rather the product of human selfishness."

What can we do to bring this truth home to the "workingman"? He does not know it, and he will not believe it. We desire to tell that struggling class, "You also, in part, make your own conditions." We wish to remind them that there is no use in reforming *external* institutions, if a like reform does not take place in the inward character. But the outside must absorb the greater share of attention for the average man. Naturally he will be thinking about the importance of changes *there*. We, on the other hand, should be looking at reform movements with reference to their ulterior purpose, judging how they are going to affect conduct.

As we know only too well, the great practical prob-

lem is to determine how *motives* are to be altered and elevated. This has been asserted so often that we hesitate to repeat it. Reforms which do not affect motives will not come to stay. We shall therefore be compelled to keep in the foreground the fact which has been gathered from a study of the laws of all history, — that improvement in institutions can never rise very much above the level of the individual human nature for which the improvement is intended.

And yet there is no use in saying this to people if they will not take it home. We gain nothing by exasperating them. They may know little about history; but they are quite conscious that there is a world of difference between their own environment and that of other classes. It will not do for us to be too bold in urging contentment and surrender. We, for the most part, may live in comparative comfort. We do not know what would be our state of mind if we were living in the condition of the wage-earner. Only the man who has himself endured a great deal, is able to influence other men to a like heroic endurance. It was the "Man of Sorrows" alone, who could deliver the "Sermon on the Mount" and make it effective.

It is right here, no doubt, that as ethical enthusiasts we tend to lose our hold on the wage-earning class. That element may answer us with the query, "Have you ever lived with your family, your wife, and children, on a dollar and a half or two dollars a day? Do you know what it is to live, work, eat, and sleep in one, two, or three rooms? Does it never affect your fineness of character or depth of sympathy or your fellow-feeling, when your personal income is reduced? You tell us that we should care for higher

character in spite of the conditions of our environment. Possibly that is true. But we see only too plainly how often it happens that when the refined individual is brought down to our position in life, he too adopts our level of interests. If you show us that you too can be quite indifferent to the influence of such conditions, we will walk in your footsteps and follow your example." The charge is significant, and we can never altogether escape it. We are not able to assert that if we were in their position we should not have exactly the same thoughts and take exactly the same attitude of mind.

The true ethical teacher, to my mind, never can receive that peculiar sympathy which goes out to the man of generous deeds and kindly heart, who simply goes about doing good. He, too, may have the same loving and generous heart. But he has to be a judge, as well as a "brother of mercy." He is compelled now and then to say "Thou art the man." It may fall upon him to tell his listener "Thou art thy brother's keeper." He may be obliged frankly to assert to people, "You are yourselves to blame." The world will not like to be told such unpleasant truths. The man who does it, takes his life in his hands. He must do it with the greatest caution, and very rarely. It will not do to be over-dramatic. The individual who performs the true religious teacher's work will tend to have that inward pressure of the lips, which implies the peculiar reliance he has on his ideals and on their immutable worth, though he walks alone and has few sympathizers. Every such teacher ought to have in him the elements of a Marcus Aurelius and a Savonarola.

The supreme work of an ethical teacher on the labour problem should be, *to explain and point out the symptoms*, rather than to suggest the remedy or cure. He must lay his finger on the wrong. It is for him to dwell on the injustice which is being done. He can tell the world what will be the inevitable result of such conduct on all human society. It may require one kind of man to discover and recognize an evil, and another kind to suggest the measures for its removal. The agitation which is going on implies something more than a particular remedy which is being sought after by the wage-earning class. The different phases, "socialism," "communism," "anarchism," "trades-unionism," when appearing in *one* class, indicate certain symptoms of heart and character in *all* classes of society. They are a product of the age, and not the offspring of one set of minds. It is no mere accident that they appear at one time and not at another. We do not destroy them by argument. We only get at them by getting at the conditions which called them into existence. What we need to do is to discover and unfold the causes, while urging the need of a remedy.

The fact is, that the non-possessing classes are dazzled by witnessing so many instances of the quick acquisition of wealth. Lavish display is before them now as never before. They see men mount by one step from poverty to affluence. What wonder that they want to do the same, and dream of methods by which this might be possible for everybody! Few human beings can be constantly in the presence of people who have had better fortune than themselves, without being made restless thereby. "Plain living

and high thinking" is not the characteristic of the age. If the ambitions and ways of living are materialistic in one class, this affects and demoralizes all classes.

We can readily understand how it is that many a person can investigate all this social agitation, see it from one side, and picture it as largely dominated by the motive of selfish aggrandizement. Yet this only saddens us all the more, because it shows how one-sided even good judgment may become, unless one approaches the subject with a heart full of sympathy, and with the conviction that when a body of people become enthusiastic over some such ideal, there *must* be genuine and noble impulses behind it all.

Yet the one conspicuous reason why the Ethical Idealist cannot throw all his energies into the effort to realize any one of these schemes, is that they may strike him as essentially one-sided, because, as we have already intimated, their main purpose is to alter conditions on the outside. But to the idealist such an effort is always a mere stepping-stone toward a more remote purpose. This has been the burden of religious teaching from time immemorial.

Contrast, for an instant, the scheme of Plato with the social ideals of to-day. The problem of the "Republic" is political rather than social; it is to develop the ideal or perfect State. The measures for the production and distribution of wealth are all subsidiary to that one purpose. The supreme ideal of that author, I should say, was the "perfect citizen."

The problem of to-day which absorbs the attention of the enthusiast, is the ideal distribution of wealth;

that is, how to reconstruct the industrial system so that property shall be apportioned out to every man on a principle of justice. In a word, the ultimate aim is the perfect industrial system.

It is needless to say that, to the Ethical Idealist, this is almost as unsatisfactory as the ultimate aim of Plato. Both are on the outside. We ask the question: Suppose that wealth is distributed on a principle of justice, what will the individual do with it, how will he make use of his share? We cannot avoid coming back to something which to us is far more fundamental. We all may be anxious enough that a principle of justice should dominate in the whole industrial system. We all may yearn after the perfect State. We also may recognize that we cannot have ideal conditions on the inside with utterly bad conditions on the outside.

But to us, nevertheless, the problem goes further. We shall be thinking all the while about the other outcome: what all this amounts to as a means for developing the Perfect Individual Man. It is for this purpose that every social or political ideal should be regarded as a mere instrument or means. We can never let this consideration go for an instant. It is to us the one thing vital and supreme in every ethical programme.

As Ethical Idealists we are obliged to ask: What is your main reason for wishing to establish the "perfect system of government"? What is the ultimate motive of your desire for an "individualistic State"? What would your socialistic "Administrative Bureau" accomplish to this one end of *making men?*

Economics, Political Science, the Industrial Problem, — these are all subordinate to the problem of Ethics. If we were merely animals, without self-conscious souls, with no sense of kinship to a higher order of existence, still there might be a need for all these other sciences. They would have their place, nevertheless. If animals could think, they too would strive to develop a model industrial system, or a Political Economy.

But we are constantly facing the query: "How these sciences may be of service in helping along toward a solution of the other problem." We ask: What can they do "to project the soul on its lone way"? — in the language of the poet Browning.

The enthusiasm at the close of the last century was for the political ideal. Men were trying to write out the perfect constitution, the ideal of the State and of government, and they were seeking to realize it in practice. But they did not accomplish their purpose. The revolution came and went. We made the effort in this country, and it was made also in Europe. Yet we are still struggling over the problem, uncertain about what is the true or perfect structure for the State. At the close of this century the enthusiasm is for the social or industrial ideal. Men are clamouring for a justice in the apportionment of material goods. By altering the methods of taxation, by changing the system for the production and distribution of wealth, they hope to accomplish it. I believe behind all this agitation there is a great amount of genuine idealism. But, nevertheless, it relates to things external. The anticipated revolution has not come, and I doubt if it will. People have become

tired of changes and revolutions. When the smoke subsides and the battle is over, they are somehow struck with the fact that the old institutions reappear after all.

I am inclined to prophesy that, by the close of the coming century, the enthusiasm may be for what I have termed the Ethical Ideal. The ambition or expectation of being able to establish a perfect system of government, or the ideal industrial system, will have exhausted itself. The structure of our political institutions will have been very much improved, and our industrial system will be on a far higher plane. Neither of them will have been revolutionized, and the dream of the radical will not have come to pass.

But, in the meantime, a few men, ever increasing in number as years go on, will have become more and more eager to realize this other aim, to concentrate every energy on developing the higher individual personality. The subjective spiritual side of our nature will have asserted its rights, perhaps even have secured a supremacy. The plans for altering industrial, political, or social institutions will be weighed, first and supremely, from this other standpoint. The problem will be in every instance: How will it serve in developing *man*?

You ask: Why not both enthusiasms at the same time? I must answer: That cannot be. No man can hold two objects *supreme*, although he may work for both in various ways. It would imply almost as much as having two religions. Your energies, your heart, your being, will concentrate along one line or the other. This is natural and inevitable.

Undoubtedly it has been well that the enthusiasm

of to-day has been centred on social or industrial reform. That was the necessary stepping-stone; just as, on the other hand, reform in political institutions has to come first as the essential step, before there can be any radical change or improvement in the industrial world. It is idle to suppose that men could have the higher, inner, subjective life of the soul, while being obliged to earn their daily bread, in defiance of the principle of justice, by trampling over their fellow-men.

These Social Ideals are the transitional step toward another movement or tendency in the coming century. They *had to be*, in order to pave the way for an enthusiasm of another kind. It has been an utter mistake on the part of many a spiritually-minded person to attack or antagonize these dreams or theories for the perfect industrial system. They are something more than visionary schemes. We must look upon them as so many methods by which the human race is trying to work out its social redemption.

We know that none of these schemes can ever be thoroughly realized. We are aware from our study of history that we cannot alter the course of nature, although at times we can help nature along. Whatever comes in the future as a social or industrial system, must be, in the main, a gradual development or outgrowth from conditions in the past. Whatever is finally established, therefore, will be the outcome of many plans.

But this does not by any means destroy the value of such Social Ideals. What if they are not realizable? Did the sculpture of Greece accomplish nothing for the human race because it gave ideal conceptions of

the human form such as no figure of man has ever equalled? Their power or influence comes from the very circumstance that they are idealistic conceptions. They present to us a type constructed in part out of aspirations dawning within the human consciousness. It is their *suggestive* value which gives them such importance. There is a poetic, a religious significance in every effort that is not merely an effort for *self*.

Few persons stop to think of all the influence which may come from holding another type before public attention. We may know that it is an ideal and nothing more. It will never exist in concrete form. But the human mind is haunted by it, nevertheless. It stirs a restless longing to reach a higher level, and shows us on what a low plane we are living.

And so it is with these millennial dreams which fascinate the minds of the populace in some instances at the present day. They play on the imagination and awaken within us a vague sense of the mediocrity of our institutions. They make us alive to the injustice prevalent everywhere. There is not one of the writers or thinkers we have named, who has not laid a finger on some sore spot in our civilization. You cannot make men think of these things by means of statistics. Figures do not appeal to the heart. The people are lethargic until a picture is given them of the opposite side, presenting to them a vision of the world where such a state of things does not exist. Then they are kindled to enthusiasm.

This is what all this social restlessness and agitation is doing. Combined with a great deal of self-seeking, with ambition for notoriety, with a mere effort for greater material welfare, it has its elements

of idealism. With its vision of better things, with its clamour for justice, it prevents men from growing seared and callous, and makes them feel that, by some means or other, conditions could be made better than they are.

When we speak of the natural unrest of the under class, we are using equivocal language. It is doubtful whether many persons would be impressed in that way if they were to see the "masses" near at hand. There may be spasmodic outbursts at times. But on closer inspection we shall be more and more struck with the natural lethargy of the body of the people. The "volcanic tongue of flame" burns in only a few at a time. The inertia of the masses oppresses one as something appalling. Instead of wondering why they are so active and aggressive, one is almost surprised when they do exert themselves. There are always a few who are ready to act. But humanity is not a tinder-box.

The restless demand for change and reform is by no means as universal as many people would suppose. It appears more often in the early life of an individual, if it develops at all. But steady labour year after year checks the uneasy spirit. The responsibility for a family and a home cools his ardour. He becomes more quick to accept little, rather than to run the risk of losing everything. Human nature, after all, is distinctly conservative.

We may not at once appreciate what a tremendous step was taken when men, instead of appealing to "might," began to appeal to "justice." It is hard for us to realize what a late occurrence this is, in the progress of the race. It is not many thousand years

since the law of the jungle prevailed, "take what you can get," and even to-day this is the situation in some parts of the earth. Although the notions of justice may be confused or erroneous, and may allow men to palliate evil or even to commit the greatest iniquities, yet the sharp corner was turned when once the principle of "might" was surrendered. Until that step was taken, the human race was ethically at a standstill. With that one change the possibilities of advance are incalculable, for it practically gives a different humanity to deal with.

This is what it signifies to watch the "historic wave-movements," seeing how idealism slowly triumphs in spite of personal rivalries, selfish bickerings, or materialistic aims. No man can ever become a true worker in such a cause, who is not able to conquer his disappointment with individual people, and look beyond the "human" side. He must first begin by conquering his disappointment with himself, as he beholds his own idealism waning in his struggle for mere existence.

Now I can understand why I was drawn to those Social Ideals, and to the men that advocated them, although I had to disagree with many of their views. It is their vision of "something better" — although not of the "best" — which captivates me; their intense conviction that a wrong exists and has to be righted; their faith in the possibility of another social order which is to come; their emphasis on *justice*, though their notions of justice may often be strange and illogical.

"Antagonize these ideals?" No; I would rather let them alone, where it is possible, if I cannot agree with them. I should prefer to try and sympathize

with them as far as my reason will allow. At times, when they suggest conceptions of justice which seem utterly reactionary and irrational, we *must*, of course, criticise them.

At the same time the Ethical Idealist will always be thinking of something else. Suppose the perfect social order should appear, what of the individual man, what would *he* be? Your young men are seeing visions, and your old men are dreaming dreams. But they are dreams and visions of the outside, of the new institutions to be shaped by legislation through the skill of the statesmen's contrivance. But what of the "man within the man" not made with hands; what of the soul of man which no legislation can reach? How is that to be shaped and fashioned and moulded into beautiful form? Our task points in that direction, because in that direction lies the Ethical Ideal.

XV

THE DIFFICULTY FOR THE IDEALIST IN TAKING SIDES ON QUESTIONS OF THE DAY

It would be impossible ever to forget the vivid impression made on my mind by the observation of Sir Henry Maine about the great influence exerted on the course of human affairs, from the mere "natural tendency of men to take sides." The truth of the assertion was at once apparent to me, and the evidences for it have been steadily cumulative through all my personal experiences and study of men. But, on the other hand, as I have gone on in life, I have been impressed with the fact that there is a class of persons who show the contrary tendency, and often find it difficult to take sides at all. They are reluctant to commit themselves on the great questions of the day, and sometimes could not do so even if they made the effort. My enthusiasm for an Ethical Movement has inspired me to try, if possible, to account for the existence of this body of men, and to determine how far their attitude is justified. The desire to take an active part in furthering the cause of progress is, naturally, very strong among all true idealists. The query is, What stands in their way?

A condition of "suspended judgment" is specially characteristic of the scholar or man of letters, of the man who thinks and reads a great deal or has a wide acquaintance with facts. This leads to the circumstance that social reform measures do not more often take their start from what we call the educated classes. A singular inertness tends to steal over the mind after it has reached a certain stage of culture. Educated people are likely to be suspicious of reform measures and of the people who advocate them. They do not, as a rule, take the initiative, but prefer to cling to what is "established," leaving it rather to other persons to begin the agitation. Even when they show a positive sympathy in favour of some measure, they are inclined to so "whittle it away" that little or nothing remains to call forth the enthusiasm of the "masses."

Social evolution would take place much more rapidly, hopefully, and happily, if this were otherwise. The scholar may have the insight; he knows the facts and understands the laws, but lacks either decisiveness or enthusiasm, and is not naturally a reformer. On the other hand, the average reformer may often lack the knowledge of history, or be unacquainted with the facts on a large scale, but he has the spirit of devotion and self-sacrifice; he can work for a cause.

Now and then the genuine instinct of the reformer manifests itself to some extent in the scholar. When this happens, he will be a very unhappy man. There can be no peace or restfulness of soul for him on earth. He yearns for change and longs to go forward, but is held back by the knowledge of too many

facts, and therefore is at times quite unable to avow his support of any one theory. Those whose welfare he has most at heart may be the ones least disposed to listen to him, because he cannot agree with them in their measures. He wants to help them, but his own observations and reflections make it plain to him that many of the proposed measures would inevitably be a failure; and so, though eager for real reform, he is obliged to wait, and is in the unhappy position of being unable for a time to do anything at all. There is nothing more overwhelming than this sense of inability to act with others, from your consciousness that the measures proposed are such as you cannot co-operate with; and that if you offer other measures there would be no approval for them, because it would require so much time and patience to carry them out.

What a satisfaction it would be if one could think steadily for a while about any of the great problems of the day, make up one's mind upon it, then lay it aside as settled, and never have one's judgment on the matter call for a reconsideration. It would be such a relief to the overtaxed mind if we could put our opinions away in a cabinet, each in its own pigeon-hole, labelled, so as to be accessible whenever we cared to draw it out and make use of it. Some persons are capable of this, and I am sure that they are happy men and women. Yet it is doubtful if the majority of people, after taking sides, could explain how they came to their views. They have simply acted from the natural tendency referred to by Sir Henry Maine. They do not really know whether they have thought a great deal about a subject or not; and they could not say positively to which of their opinions they had

come by sober reflection rather than by the accident of circumstances. They know what they think; but how they came to think in that way, they may not know.

When an individual displays hesitation about expressing himself on important questions of the day, when he seems reluctant to have opinions, he will often be considered by many persons as insincere. It will be said that he is afraid to commit himself. The public assumes that he *must* have made up his mind, because nearly everybody else has done so. Beyond any doubt, a lack of sincerity is possible among those who do not commit themselves. There is too much of such moral cowardice. A man may not wish others to know that he has definite convictions, even when he has made up his mind, because it would be to his advantage if the public assumed that he was in a state of uncertainty. He understands the workings of prejudice, and sees that the present wave of opinion may die out altogether in a short time, or shift in an opposite direction. Yet, if he commits himself and opposes the transient prejudice, he may lose so much influence that a step of that kind would strike him as suicidal. How far this caution is legitimate we cannot say. I fancy that much mental suffering is experienced by those whose opinions are carefully watched every moment, and yet who wish to be strictly true and consistent in their attitude.

It is quite certain that if there is to be progress, there must be a class of men who are ready to commit themselves, and take a stand on important issues, *fearless of consequences*. If educated people will not

do this, then we must be glad that it is done by the uneducated, rather than not to have it done at all. We must have reform. The agitation has to begin somewhere, even if the method be somewhat indiscriminate. Some one must go ahead, take the lead, be a radical, and insist on changes. Civilization can advance by no other means.

And yet, when the human mind is once possessed with this tendency, it is deplorably in danger of acting utterly without bounds or limitation. Social reform movements are often held back for generations because of this. The instinct for change may become a mania. A person begins, perhaps, by doubting the value of some one feature of our industrial system, and attacks it vigorously. Then, having started along this line and become eager over this special reform, he is led, ere long, to disbelieve in the whole system, and to doubt the very institution of private property. Or he may take up the methods of taxation, and become convinced that they should be radically modified. Yet he is liable not to stop there. He endeavours to look further and see the real cause of the evils, and finally concludes that there is something bad in the entire structure of society, and that the whole political system should be taken down and built over again. After having invaded the political and industrial world with his schemes, he begins to doubt as to the worth of existing social ties; he questions the value or sacredness of marriage; he would renovate or revolutionize the structure of the family; and, finally, would overthrow all institutions of religion.

Few go the entire length we have been describing. Yet there are many instances of this tendency. From

starting with one earnest measure of reform about which a man has become enthusiastic, and into the circumstances of which he may have made an exhaustive investigation, by and by he appears as the advocate of a whole "car-load" of reform measures. This lack of mental balance on the part of the reformer is a sad check on the progress of human society. He loses the sense of discrimination, and therefore fails to inspire confidence in his cause. His lack of care and judgment keeps men from sympathizing with him and indorsing important measures of reform. It is melancholy to realize that to be "emancipated" at the present time often means being opposed to anything and everything which has come to be "established"; or, on the other hand, being in sympathy with the "new views" just because they are new. This may not imply *thinking for one's self* at all. It is almost as easy for certain minds to fall into the habit of showing sympathy with what is new because it is new, as for others to continue in the habit of approving what is old because it is old.

If people are going to take sides at all, it is vital that they should be able to put trust in one another's judgment, and use one another's knowledge and opinions. But they can only do this in so far as they are convinced that they have mutually come to their convictions through sober reflection. The point to be remembered is that at certain epochs or in certain problems it may require moral courage *not* to take sides until we know exactly where we are. We, each one of us, have the cause of the social ideal in our charge, and we shall be responsible for any step taken by us which may interfere with its furtherance.

We must be careful, therefore, lest we unintentionally create a prejudice against the very cause we have most at heart.

It is unfortunate, for instance, that some of those who are working especially for a higher *industrial* system, should also be disposed to tamper with the sacred institution of marriage. It would surely be much better for their purpose if they would struggle with might and main for one great reform at a time, and make a thorough investigation of all the facts or circumstances connected with it. They forget that the antagonism aroused by their attacks in one direction, also tends to be turned against measures they are advocating in another direction; and by this mistake they lose, rather than gain, sympathy for the chief aim they have in view.

Now it is one thing to be eager to have society, with all its institutions, renovated from top to bottom, and quite another thing to be ready either with a partial or a complete system of measures by which to bring about the renovation. We may be driven to acknowledge that the conditions are exceedingly bad, and that there is an evil all the way through. We may brood over the matter, and yearn for a higher, deeper, purer, humanity. This will be the attitude of every genuine idealist. But with many people it is very hard to recognize an evil and not be quick with a remedy. What really makes the thoughtful man hesitate, is the very depth of his sympathy and the magnitude of the problem. He is confronted with an immense number of schemes, but does not know whose judgments or opinions he can trust. A multitude of minor influences are constantly acting

upon men, and inducing them to take sides. How far can the thoughtful man join forces with such persons, and put confidence in their attitude?

It is only necessary to illustrate this situation by observing how quick men are to side with the class or profession to which they belong. It is sometimes asserted that the real tendency is always for a man to follow the lead of his personal interests. But I very much doubt this statement. There is a social consciousness; and the social consciousness which speaks in ourselves is very liable to be that of our profession or our class. If there were only the two courses, it would be better if men took sides chiefly from a consideration of their own interests. Under these circumstances each man would at least be somewhat under the check of his own conscience. A class conscience is often very weak and unstable. A man will forgive his class for conduct that he would never excuse in himself; he will allow himself to adopt the standpoint of his class when he would be ashamed to take such a stand all by himself. This is what makes class judgment so menacing. It has a weak conscience, and is so liable to take sides with its own interests. How often we know a man's standpoint in advance, simply by knowing the class, occupation, or profession to which he belongs!

When, therefore, people come to us urging us to join forces with them, and enter the lists in the cause of the reform measures which they are advocating, or against measures which they are opposing, we may be compelled to hesitate because we fear they are acting under class prejudice. Every man who

sides with his class should be far more cautious in judging as to the facts, and far more thorough in investigating them, than if he sides the other way. It is very rare for a man not to think that most of the wrong is on one side. If he is disposed to believe that there is wrong on both sides, he is in a pretty bad predicament. He must stand out in the cold, or keep his views to himself; for few will want to listen to him.

We are *naturally* prejudiced in favour of the judgments of the men of our class or profession. We are apt to think that they are better capable of forming trustworthy opinions. I think this explains the lack of accord between the scholar and the man of affairs; although the lines of prejudice between these two elements are much less sharply drawn than formerly, especially in England. But there has always been more or less distrust between the practical man and the scholar. If the latter advances an opinion, he is said to be "a mere theorist." If the man in practical life contradicts him, or voices a different view, we may hear the remark, "Oh, well; it is the tradesman's standpoint; he cannot help it." The same unfortunate distrust often exists between the economist and the working class. Many will deny this. But in talking with the working class I have found a striking lack of confidence in the men who hold the chairs of political economy. It is asserted that they are allied with the possessing class; that they belong to institutions which depend on "good dividends" or on the favour of the wealthy for their very existence; and, therefore, that they would not take sides against the interests of their institutions. On the

other hand, in talking with some economists, one meets with the statement that the working class want changes just from mere restlessness; that they demand higher wages irrespective of improvement in the amount or quality of their work; that they will not look squarely at the facts; that, in a word, they are agitators rather than true reformers.

It is my conviction that this mutual want of confidence is a mistake, and that neither class of persons is what the other is inclined to believe about it. But I am only describing conditions and analyzing a situation. These conditions exist, and they are certainly greatly to be regretted; because they prevent the thoughtful man from being in a position where he could make up his mind without prejudice, while at the same time using all the knowledge and insight of other men which might be serviceable for that purpose.

It is humiliating to know that many of those whom one wishes to influence will not listen, unless they regard one as substantially in agreement with themselves. What is influence worth, after all, under those circumstances? A man who takes the other side may almost be ruled out of his class. People do not say to us very often "give us sympathy." We could do *that* with all our hearts. They say to us rather, "come and approve the course we have been pursuing." But if we do that, and gratify their wish, we may be conscious that we shall be their actual enemies and not showing them true sympathy at all. The very depth of our interest in their cause may compel us to disagree with them.

This is the disheartening feature in much of the

agitation of the present day. We are reluctant to believe that the men who disagree with us really sympathize with us. Instinctively we turn to the leaders who take our side, and put our cause in their hands. This situation of itself explains why the thoughtful and conscientious man finds it difficult to take sides at all.

It is singular how determined many persons are, that we should come out squarely with a "yes" or "no" in reference to their one attitude. Some time ago I was met by a man, deeply interested in social reform, at the railway station in St. Louis, who turned upon me rather suddenly and confronted me with the question, "Now, give me a straight answer. Are you an individualist or a collectivist?" Yet if I had given him a straight, unqualified answer, I would have been untrue to myself. It would have been done in order to gain his sympathy, or make him feel that I had taken his side.

My answer would not have been straight to the point, because it would have been addressed to the real cause he had at heart, and not to his theory. My attitude on social reform takes its start not from enthusiasm for an abstract theory, but from my sympathy with the suffering and the stricken everywhere. As a religious teacher, devoting my life and energy to the moral elevation of the race to which I belong, my heart goes out first and supremely to the weak, the struggling, to those who are least able to protect themselves. Whatever theory, or system, or measure would lift the struggling masses of my fellow-men to a higher level, advance them to a purer, nobler, happier condition of life, would be the measure or theory

I would approve of. Ask me what my heart yearns for, and I can give my answer without qualification. Ask me what class of human society I want most to help, and I know on the instant. Ask me what theory I believe in, — that, alas ! is another matter.

A study of the laws of social evolution has convinced me that there is no one special reform measure, no one system or theory, which is adapted to the improvement of every class of society, in every age, or under all conditions. The method that would be most advisable for Germany is not the method that would accomplish the same results in the United States of America. The reform measure suitable for helping the struggling masses a thousand or two thousand years ago, may not be the measure most serviceable or advantageous for the same purpose at the present day. The system which we might try at this time would, perhaps, not be the system most advisable two centuries hence.

Hence, one might be a collectivist for one country and an individualist for another ; or, on the other hand, an individualist for one age and a collectivist for another. We can see that there is no one panacea which can be applied universally to every age or to all conditions of society. For this reason we cannot get much further ahead until we are more thoroughly convinced that there is a separate social problem for each and every country ; yes, we might say for every city and community. We can see plainly enough that the same industrial system or the same political institutions could not be adapted indiscriminately to all the nations of the earth. The system to be tried will need to be adjusted to the dominant habits or

motives which have been prevailing in each community, or in each age or country. A man might have to be an individualist in one century, in order that collectivism might triumph in the next century.

One truth, however, comes clear and positive from the discussions and experience of the last twenty-five years. The time has gone by when we can judge of the worth of a reform measure in the abstract all by itself. We cannot give a straight, unqualified answer to many of the questions of the day. If we examine all the facts at our command or search through history for its laws, it comes home to us that we cannot assume that one theory or one system may be altogether right or altogether wrong. It is idle for us at the present time to assert squarely that we do or do not approve of "trades-unionism." The system must depend on the country where it is tried, or on the special method it introduces. One trade-union may be altogether bad and another emphatically good. So, likewise, we can no longer assert that we do or do not believe in "strikes." This, too, is one of the great questions of the day; but the real point to be considered now is, that each occurrence of this kind is to be judged by itself. And so, likewise, of the many reform measures and schemes being proposed in this country or in Europe, — the eight-hour law, old-age pensions, taxation on land or on income and inheritance, municipal ownership of street railways and waterworks, high tariff, low tariff, or free trade, strong local government, or strong central government, a minimum living wage for the working class, the nationalization of many branches of industry, more stringent divorce laws. Each great step or

measure must be approved or disapproved according to the circumstances of the locality for which it is intended or the class of persons it is designed to help ; that is, *on the merits of its specific case.*

This is surely one of the most important changes which must take place, if it is ever going to be possible for thoughtful men to take sides on questions of the day. It is essential that we abandon the wholesale method of judgment, and ask whether this special case or that special method was justifiable or unjustifiable.

And yet in this whole problem in reference to the difficulty of taking sides, the most vital consideration is not as to local conditions and circumstances, any more than as to the merits of abstract theories. The fundamental cause of the whole embarrassment is that, as we have already intimated, people do not know whom to trust or to believe in. They want leaders, but are afraid of those they have. This makes a direful situation.

A theory has very much less influence than the kind of men who advocate it. I know that this statement will strike many as a rather startling heresy. We have been told again and again about the influence of *ideas*. Nevertheless, experience with the world more and more confirms my assertion. Ideas and ideals have existed for thousands of years ; but real *men* are rare. When the right man comes forward, then, for the first time, the ideal becomes a living force. It may wait for centuries before this will occur. Whether a theory becomes a menace or an encouragement depends on the character of the persons whom it influences. The trouble is that people do not know where to turn for genuine leaders.

Yet it is human society itself which is responsible for the lack of trustworthy leaders. Such men would appear if they were truly wanted. But pride of judgment, or the instinctive disposition to take sides, prevents men from accepting the true leader when he comes. They want a universal panacea, — a “cure-all,” — and they dream of a speedy coming of the millennium.

It is this weakness on the part of average mankind which tempts the ordinary leader to over-promise for the measures he is advocating. He may know at heart that these measures cannot perform one-quarter of what the people desire. But he must exaggerate their possible usefulness in order to get any attention at all. This tendency has demoralized political life, so that the thoughtful man very rarely has full confidence in the great leaders in the arena of politics. On the other hand, the leader himself knows that his measures are sure to end in a compromise, and that he must try to get a great deal in order to get anything at all.

This condition would surely be most disheartening if it were not for the fact that it indicates where the solution of the difficulty may ultimately lie. As men become more *true*, it will be easier and easier to take sides on questions of the day. The existence of civilization itself requires an ever larger degree of integrity in the individual components which make up the social organism. I believe, for this reason, that it will become less and less difficult, as civilization advances, for the thoughtful, conscientious man to be able to make up his mind, and to ally himself with the causes which he has most at heart.

We must always allow for a certain amount of human weakness in men's judgments. No person can ever altogether escape from the influence of his occupation or life-work. It would be unfair to expect that the business man should be accustomed to pause and delay for long intervals before making up his mind. In his occupation it is absolutely necessary for him to be quick and alert, able to pass judgment, and to decide with little delay. This ready intuition probably has a great deal to do with success in commercial life.

It is not surprising that the business man, who watches all the social agitation, should think first of its effect upon trade and commerce. He is there for the sake of making his business successful. How can he help being concerned with every change going on which might have an effect upon his efforts? But there is one very serious mistake often made by men of affairs, whether belonging to the working class or the possessing class. The necessity of forming opinions as to what course should be taken, at the very moment of greatest excitement, will often lead a man at the same instant to make up his mind on the fundamental principles. He becomes "set" along a certain line at the very time when sober judgment is the least possible. In this regard the scholar has the advantage, and surely is more trustworthy in his views on the fundamental issues involved. The very fact that he is not compelled to take a decisive course of action at the moment, makes it possible for him to hold his mind in a state of "suspended judgment" at the epochs of greatest excitement. For this reason it strikes me that the

man of affairs owes a certain deference to the judgment of the scholar on the fundamental economic laws and tendencies. I believe, for instance, that the political economist would be a far better judge than the man in commercial life, on the question whether a reduction of the tariff would tend to increase or decrease the total production of wealth within a given country. But the man in commercial life would probably be a much better judge as to the effects of some specific tariff measure, on the condition of trade at any one moment.

In connection with every scheme of reform, we must remember that it will be looked at from two quite opposite points of view, according to the persons to whom it is presented. On the one hand, there is the theorist, or idealist, who would judge from its more ultimate effects on the character of the people rather than on their material welfare, and on the country at large, or all mankind, rather than on some one locality. On the other hand, the practical man will judge it by the immediate effects it would have on everyday affairs, or on purely "temporal" interests. But as every reform measure is brought forward with the intention of having it adopted and tried, we often have a very complicated problem in determining what scheme will be "along the lines of least resistance." The idealist is compelled to adjust his plans or measures of reform to the men who are inclined to view everything from the "temporal" aspect. When, therefore, two schemes are presented to us, we might be obliged to take sides with the one less near to our hearts, because there would be absolutely no hope, at the present

time, of winning acceptance for the other. It implies that oftentimes we must choose the less satisfactory programme rather than accomplish nothing at all.

This is the saddest ordeal which awaits the idealist. He knows that he can never get exactly what he wants, and the problem is always facing him to what extent he shall give in and accept the next best measure. One has to grapple not only with a complicated set of facts, but also with one's conscience. Many a strong and enthusiastic nature has succumbed and grown weak in the fight, from a constant surrender of this kind. If the man who does this is not a vigorous, strong character at the outset, he is sure to become utterly demoralized.

Yet there are times when we know it would be a waste of energy to be constantly advocating a reform which the great majority of the people at the present moment would not consider or tolerate. If we are conscious that even after the adoption of a measure, a large proportion of persons affected by it would be antagonistic to it, and seek for every possible means of opposing or evading it, then we may conclude that, while this would be ideally the best system or scheme, practically we should accomplish little or nothing by trying it, because it would not be along the lines of least resistance. This is one reason, for example, why we have probably done well in America to abandon the proposed plan of an income tax, although it might seem ideally the most justifiable. In the place of this we may find it preferable to urge an extensive scheme of inheritance taxes, because there would be less disposition on the part of the masses of the people to shirk it or oppose it. An-

other similar difficulty in this country is always facing us in reference to ideal plans of reform, from our knowledge that even if they are adopted, they may be thrown aside in impatience before the experiments have had a fair trial. A great deal of legislation has been wasted in America owing to lack of patience on the part of the people.

It is no mean problem, therefore, which confronts the man who wishes to take sides on questions of the day, and at the same time be sure in doing so that he will be working for the best interests of the human race.

We, each of us, may have for Society an ideal that we would like to see realized. No earnest mind will content itself with aims which have reference only to the welfare of mankind at any one time. He will be ever looking forward to the human race which will be existing ten thousand years hence. That will be the ultimate goal he will *actually* be labouring for. He may not have very much to say about it, because it would strike average minds as only a fanciful dream, and would make them smile if it were talked about a great deal. Yet every deep, earnest, thoughtful man is sustained by just such a dream. It is unreal only because it is so far away.

We know that the ultimate aim we are striving for cannot be accomplished until long after we have gone to our rest. The vision of the coming centuries will solace us for the slow, determined struggle we must make at the present time. Much of our effort will be concentrated merely on building the stepping-stones. It is in the choice of these that we have the greatest difficulty in taking sides. Nearly all of the

reform measures of the day are of this character; and the man who thrusts his scheme forward as the final and immediate solution to all the difficulties which are interfering with the advance of the human race, is cherishing only an illusion. It is the humanity of all future time, and not this human race of our own century, which is involved in our problem.

Much anxiety prevails over the vast amount of agitation going on in reference to these schemes for social reform. Some are looking upon it as a menace to order and established institutions. They fancy that it either leads men to make up their minds too quickly, or else keeps them from making up their minds at all. I am satisfied that those who take this attitude are committing a grave mistake. Discussion, in the long run, will discourage more violence than it causes. The appalling danger comes from the possibility that the mass of the people may continue to take sides from sheer instinct or from downright prejudice. We want more rather than less discussion, more rather than less agitation. The human race will only begin on its true ideal march of progress when it has conquered the habit of taking sides from a mere natural instinct or tendency, and is disposed to act on the best judgment of the most competent minds who have had the largest experience and are best acquainted with the facts and laws of history.

It is manifest that I am not undertaking to give a solution to any of the great questions of the day. My aim has been to account for the existence among thoughtful men of this difficulty in taking sides. My purpose was to discover whether the trouble lies in human nature itself, in a lack of enthusiasm through

increasing culture, in an inability to get at the facts, in the absence of true leadership, or in a new complexity in the problems themselves. All these causes are undoubtedly more or less at work.

It may seem as if my attitude were one of discouragement. It will strike many that I have been making a plea on behalf of a continuous state of suspended judgment. That would certainly be utterly outside my purpose. It would be moral cowardice for a man to hold himself indefinitely in such an attitude. My readers are mainly students or thoughtful people, men who want to be conscientious in their attitude. Undoubtedly the difficulties embarrassing such persons, when seeking to take sides, are much greater than ever before. Yet this can be no excuse for inaction. There is a way out of the difficulty, and at some future time I should be glad to face that aspect of the subject and treat it at length. The best clue that I have met with anywhere, was given me by Dr. Felix Adler, in what he said to me in a recent conversation over the points of this lecture. I give his own words, —

“Action itself is the best means of discovering the principles that should determine action. We are not at liberty, indeed, to act blindly or on mere impulse. But having endeavoured, with painstaking conscientiousness, to ascertain the Right, let us heartily and courageously begin to put in practice what we think so; always, indeed, holding our convictions subject to revision under the teachings of experience, and yet serving what we hold to be the Truth with unbounded devotion, because it stands to us, for the time being, in the place of the Absolute Truth.”

But this would involve another chapter, and I must leave the subject at this point.

XVI

ON WHAT BASIS CAN ETHICS JUSTIFY PRIVATE PROPERTY?

WHAT is it that authorizes a person to say of anything with a clear conscience, "This is mine"? The thought is sure at times to press on the consciousness, "What gives me the right to what I possess?" This is not an issue that pertains exclusively to one element of human society. Strictly speaking, we cannot divide the world into a "possessing" and a "non-possessing" class. We all own something, although it may be only a very small amount and not for very long. Whether it be a labourer who is paid his wages on Saturday night, or the stockholder who receives his dividends at regular periods in the year, they each, for the time being, will say of the money or coupons in their hands, "This is mine."

But if they think at all, they must have some conviction in mind, which satisfies them of the justice of their claim. The individual who draws a salary, whether as an office clerk or as a bank president, whether as a clergyman or as the head of some vast corporation, will now and then be led to ask, "Where does this salary come from? Why is it mine? To what extent is it right for me to dispose of it as I please?" It is for each and all of us, irrespective

of our condition in life, to answer the query as to what justifies us in speaking of anything as "my property." At this point economics forms a part of the science of ethics; and ethics, a part of the science of economics.

The question is before the world, but the solution is not at hand. It would be idle for any one individual to attempt to settle the matter on his own judgment. Society comes to an agreement on vital problems of this kind, only by a long, slow process of mental disturbance and agitation. One fact, however, is very plain: people are *thinking* about this subject as they have never done before.

Human nature is becoming more refined. It is not only more sensitive to pain and pleasure; it not only responds more quickly to beauty of form and colour and music; but it has a more delicate conscience. Its peace of mind is more easily disturbed. Men are troubled over this question of property. They believe they are right in possessing it, and yet they are uncomfortable about it. Some one may say to people of wealth, "You are not justified in owning so much. You ought to give it up in part or altogether." On the other hand, the wage-earners who may be almost in a starvation condition in some of the cities of Europe, might say to the more prosperous wage-earners in America, "You ought to divide with us. Is it right that you should receive more than we do? Surely we labour as hard as yourselves." The more prosperous mechanic and the still more fortunate men with private incomes, do not feel that they are altogether in the wrong in refusing to "divide," and yet it kindles a sense of discomfort in their minds.

We can appreciate how important the subject has become at the present day, by observing what a variety of scruples prevail on the one point as to *what kind of property a man would be unwilling to possess or to claim as his own*. Most men would draw the line somewhere. Their peace of mind would be disturbed if they knew their property was of a certain kind, however secure they might feel themselves in keeping it. But when they come to specify *what* kind, they are often wide asunder. They do not agree at all in their particular scruples.

We know of men, like Ruskin, who would refuse to take interest on money. They may believe in private property; but if it came in that one special form they would not say, "This is mine." Then, on the other hand, there are conscientious persons who would be quite ready to receive money or wealth in the form of interest, but who would not think themselves justified in owning land. They look upon that form of ownership as a crime against society. There is also a class who would not like to hold wealth acquired through speculation, although they would be only too ready to possess it if it came as the legitimate profits of a manufacturing business. Still others would be quite content to own property gained through speculation in stocks and bonds, but who would be troubled in mind if it came through speculation in the necessities of life. Some persons, too, would be disturbed to receive their wealth as the direct owners or managers of certain forms of business; but they would have no anxiety in drawing wages or salary from such firms, or at knowing that their income is reaped from the interest on the bonds

of such companies. Many a person may hold his property with equanimity, although it has indirectly come through a community whose prosperity depends very largely on forms of trade of which he would emphatically disapprove. There is also a great variety of scruples with reference to wealth received by inheritance. Men may be conscious that a part of the property which has come to them in that form, was acquired through methods which they would not be willing to themselves use. But they are ready to say with composure, "This is mine" of wealth gained through questionable methods by those who have gone before them, while they would not be at peace with themselves if they had acquired it by such means through their own efforts.

But the scruples exist, and they are growing in force and influence; although it is painful to reflect that, in spite of ourselves, each man's scruples pertain to just those forms of property which he does not happen to possess. This element of responsibility for the kind of property we may hold or receive, certainly opens up a sphere of ethics which as yet has only been imperfectly explored. There are persons with a most refined conscience, who do not seem to have thought of the matter at all. And yet the majority of people will at times have a sense of compunction as to what justifies them in their private possessions. They would like to be clear in their own minds on the subject. We cannot look at those less fortunate than ourselves without a sense of uneasiness. For every living person there is always some other person lower in the scale than himself, to whom he can look as a being less well off than him-

self. From the top to the bottom of society, this feeling of compunction may exist. It is not that we feel ourselves entirely in the wrong solely because we are more fortunate than others. But there is a lurking sense of wrong somewhere. There is a kind of uneasiness of the *race-conscience*, which we have to account for, in reference to this whole subject of property.

What a change has come about in the very idea or *meaning* of private property since it first became established in history! The very conception of it is different from what it was twenty centuries, or even one century ago. At one time the privilege of ownership implied the right to do with a thing exactly as a man pleased. He might consume it, waste it, preserve it, throw it away, destroy it, do anything whatsoever with it. That was law; that was right; that was justice. The conception appears to have applied to almost every kind of private property. A man could deal in that way with his cattle, his slaves, and his family. There was at first only one slight qualification. He could do all this, he had the right of use and abuse *within the limits of law*. But that one qualification, so trifling at first in the earlier stages of society, was destined practically to transform the very idea of property.

If we were to retain the old conception, the thing itself could scarcely be said to exist as an institution; there would be no private property. We would need to find a new term to describe the present situation. Restrictions came first with reference to the family. A man was the owner of his children, but he was not allowed to take their lives. And then as to his slaves;

he might abuse them or maltreat them, but their lives were to be sacred. That, however, was only the beginning of the limitations. They cover an ever wider and wider field. The absolute ownership of land is taken away. If the community or the State required it, they could appropriate it, although for a compensation. But complete right of "use and abuse" in the case of land no longer existed; it ceased by the establishment of the law of "eminent domain." Yet it may be assumed that other forms of personal property are exempt from these qualifications. A man can spend his wealth as he pleases, save it, waste it, destroy it, give it away. But when he comes to die, the restriction then occurs; absolute ownership ceases. Whether he desires to do so or not, he must leave a part of his wealth to his family. Another portion is taken by certain States as an "inheritance tax." The limitations to the "right of bequest" remove another feature of absolute possession.

The restrictions on the privileges of ownership are introduced even in the most common, daily affairs. We do not seem able to treat anything quite as "our own." We say that a man "possesses" a horse. It is "his property." He has bought it and paid for it. Can he deal with it as he pleases? What if he pleases to abuse the animal? A Humane Society, much to our satisfaction, interferes and brings him under the penalty of the law. And so it is that a man cannot claim absolute ownership over his children; he does not have full liberty with the very brutes which are in his possession.

We recognize the contrast most fully by reflecting upon the most significant of all the qualifications.

When the law was put upon the statute books making attempt at suicide a crime, private property, as the idea was understood in earlier times, was practically extinguished. If a man cannot do as he pleases with his own life, if the ownership of his own person is subject to qualification, then surely the very conception of ownership is undergoing a transformation. We are either reverting to a still earlier notion, or else a new theory is gradually coming into supremacy. But it is plain that private property does not find its justification in the *idea* of property itself.

What a change, too, has taken place in the very *condition* of property as we trace it back to the first stages of human society! We say so positively of anything we possess, "This is mine," that it is difficult for us to conceive how men could ever have taken any other attitude. A sense of private ownership appears to be one of the fundamental instincts of the human race. And yet it is pretty generally accepted among economists, that a supposition of that kind is altogether contrary to the facts of history. Closer investigation has shown that private property has not always existed as an institution. It was the *tribe*, the *clan*, which first said, "This is mine."

It was not the individual, but society, which first asserted the principle of ownership. We are forced to recognize that communal possession was the preliminary stage in the evolution of property. Private ownership came as a later step in the long series of changes by which the human race has developed into its present condition. "Ancient law knows next to nothing of individuals," says Maine.

Private property cannot, therefore, claim for its jus-

tification that it has always existed as an institution. It is a long, long step from those prehistoric conditions of communal possession, to the day when it was accepted as a first principle of common law that "everything must have an owner." The steps have been traversed, nevertheless. Human nature may still be the same in its fundamental characteristics. But it is now living under a new and widely different kind of civilization.

By a process extending over hundreds and thousands of years, the whole conception of property has gone through a transformation. We no longer grant absolute right, irrespective of conditions and circumstances. We would not allow a man even to spend his own money as he pleased, if it should involve inevitable moral deterioration. If, for example, the opium-habit was to rapidly increase, a law would perhaps be introduced making the use of opium a punishable offence, unless some other method could be found to check the evil.

This attitude of mind with reference to the privileges of ownership is not that of any particular body of men. We all act on the new principle without thinking about it. It is the tacitly accepted standpoint of our customs, laws, and institutions. The revolution has been gradually taking place by a process of evolution. I am seeking to trace the tendencies of thought on this subject, and not to offer a solution of my own.

When we raise the question, "What justifies private property?" we must adopt all these conditions and qualifications, before we seek an answer to the problem. Private ownership still exists and is a recog-

nized institution of the civilized world. But it is quite a different institution, in many of its aspects, from what it was hundreds or thousands of years ago.

It might at first be supposed that we could justify private ownership by observing how it came, as a principle, to exist and be established. Many a person who is not acquainted with the facts of history, would probably take it for granted that a very large share of property in the world had passed into private possession as the reward of personal labour. Wealth is mostly created by that means. Did it not come into the condition of individual ownership because society recognized the right of a man to claim for himself the fruits of his own exertions? Unfortunately, investigation has proven precisely the contrary. As we follow the course of events back through the centuries, it becomes clear that private property had its origin in another way. It came through violence and aggression. Men took what they could get and kept it as long as they could. It was *appropriation by the strongest*, which probably first established the principle of individual ownership. This appears to be accepted now as a fact of history by the best students who have examined the subject. We need only to refer to so cautious and conservative a writer as John Stuart Mill.

The law of the land does not settle or determine absolute right to titles of property. Its plea is not to the ultimate sense of ideal justice. The basis of its statutes and decisions is "undisturbed possession for a certain period of years." If a man has held or occupied the property for a given length of time, he is given the title. The law does not undertake to

deal with the question how the ownership may have been acquired many hundred years ago. It sets a limit of time, beyond which it cannot interfere. And so its principle is that of "occupation," and not "absolute justification."

The origin of private property makes a sombre page in human history. We all, to a greater or less degree, are involved in the occurrences of the past. We can never assert positively of any portion of wealth, "Just this part came into private ownership solely as the honest fruits of labour, and that portion wholly through aggression and violence." We may reap the benefits of the sins of others and never be conscious of it. It is quite certain that the present condition of affairs does not rest on a basis of ideal justice. It is equally positive that we cannot justify the private ownership of wealth by the way its first establishment as an institution was brought about.

It is not strange, therefore, that one of the first answers to the problem which have been given should have been altogether negative. It has been asserted that private property is utterly without justification. Proudhon, in France, enunciated his famous doctrine in the terse cry, "What is property? Property is robbery!" It was to be expected that, in the process of change, some minds would leap to this other conclusion and assume that there could be no justification for any form of ownership. But as yet the world, for the most part, still accepts the principle of private property. Even the ideal of socialism retains it in a modified way, as Schaeffle of Vienna has pointed out in his little treatise on that subject. The issue for us is to *make it square with our sense of justice.*

But there is another theory which still has a powerful hold upon many thoughtful people. It finds expression in a number of different ways. It goes with the reverence for fixed institutions. "Private property has existed so long that it *must* be right," men seem to think. They assume, for that reason, that it was established by divine intelligence. It has come by the law of Nature, through the process of evolution. If accident or fortune had anything to do with it, then it was the same accident or fortune that rules the earth or the universe. They claim the right of ownership to other property on the same principle that they assert ownership to the muscles of their bodies, the capacities of their brains, the qualities of their souls. They believe it to be an institution of nature, and so an institution of God.

This is, however, in substance the same as the theory of right by occupation, which is the basis of *law* with reference to property. But it is, after all, a most unsatisfactory position. Any institution could seek justification by that means, provided it had existed long enough. Human slavery undoubtedly survived much longer than otherwise would have been the case, because it supported itself by that plea. No criterion has ever been agreed upon which should determine just how long a custom must exist, in order to be regarded as an institution of Nature. Many an evil has been able to perpetuate itself because it was mistakenly assumed to have been established by the will of Providence. It is always a perilous step for any man to venture to interpret the plans of the Supreme Mind or the "intentions of Nature." The Divine Will builds and unbuilds through human

agency, especially in reference to human institutions.

There is one theory, however, which does seem to rest directly on human instinct for its support. It is that which asserts ownership to the *product of one's own labour*. "What I have made, is mine," a man says to himself. He is not disposed to argue the question. His position looks impregnable; it appears to come as a first principle of his very being. He clings to the work of his hands almost as he clings to life itself. He cannot at first conceive that his standpoint requires justification. "What I produce is my property," says human nature.

Philosophy itself has given the highest sanction to this theory. We have only to recall the authority of Locke, the great English writer of the seventeenth century.

Others have made it the basis of their social ideals. It is felt that we identify ourselves with what we produce, so that it seems to become a part of ourselves. When we surrender it, then we almost fancy we are surrendering a portion of our life-blood. Human instinct does appear to come to the support of the man who claims the right to keep for himself what is the direct outcome of his own labour. What I make or do is a part of the self which makes it. It comes of my being; it receives the stamp of my mind; it is the offspring of my energy; it is mine. Labour makes property. And so, it is argued, labour justifies private property.

Undoubtedly through all ages this will be a favourite plea. It was rooted in human nature before it appeared in ethics, economics, or social philosophy.

And the plea can be accepted, provided there goes with it the assertion of another instinct, which, however, introduces a most important qualification. Along with the demand of the self which claims the right of ownership to the product of its own labour, stands another exaction of the conscience and of the consciousness; and that is, that we pay back to others the help they have given us in making it possible for us to do our work and secure ourselves in our possessions. If a man has loaned me a part of the fruits of his labour, so that I can work to better advantage; or if, indirectly, through his aid, I am able to accomplish more; does not the same instinct of justice within me require that I remunerate him in proportion to the help he has given me? In other words, private property is justified to the extent that we are entitled to claim as absolutely our own the product of our own labour, *after we have paid back what we owe to others*. But that one condition alters the whole standpoint. When can we ever say that we have fully settled that account? What we owe by written contract is but a very small portion of our indebtedness. Surely no honest man would repudiate his unwritten obligations merely because they could not be enforced by law. The same instinctive human nature which asserts its claim to the fruits of its own labour, holds up before us those unwritten claims and says, in peremptory tones, "Pay what thou owest."

Who can tell how much he would have left to call his own after he had met those obligations? What man can assume, positively, of any object that it is altogether the result of his own work, unaided by the

labours of others? I remind you of what was said on this point in the lecture on the "Family." Would any of us assume, when thinking of the father or mother who has sacrificed so much for our own welfare, that we have paid off the debt we owe them? Have we returned to them the share which they contributed out of the products of their labour, in order that we might become able to do our work in the world? As a man looks in the face of those parents, can he ever say, with perfect assurance, of any object, "This is absolutely mine, because I alone have made it, and I owe no man anything?" What person could feel satisfied that he had made full return to the community where he has lived and worked and made his way? Does he fancy that he has balanced the account by paying his share of the taxes? Was there nothing else in the bond? Then why would it not have gone as well with him in some uncivilized community in the heart of Africa? Is he not indirectly reaping the benefit of the labour of thousands of others now living, as well as of the labours of still other thousands who have done their work there and passed away? Can we determine precisely when we are no longer in debt to the country or nation by whose existence *we* exist?

These various forms of obligation are not mere sentiments which we can settle through feelings of gratitude. They represent just so many different forms in which we have shared the fruits of other people's labour, and so been able to reap the fruits of our own labour. We are conscious that we could not settle the account if we should try. To the fathers and mothers, to the friends and kindred, to

the community, to the city and the nation, we must acknowledge a debt that we can never pay.

If we admit that we owe something to all those living and dead, the product of whose work has aided us in doing our work, what is there left as the fruit of our labour of which we can individually say, "I alone have made it, and hence it is mine?" Labour would give title to private property if only we could first pay off that infinite array of obligations which we owe to our fellow-men and to the race to which we belong. But under the existing circumstances, it is not the most satisfactory kind of a title.

But there is one aspect of this whole subject which we have not yet introduced. Another word is more and more coming to the lips of statesmen and economists. It is *expediency*. Idealism shrinks from any such consideration. We do not want that kind of a principle at the basis of our social structure. It reduces us to a level with the brute creation. And yet we cannot overlook the plain facts. The human race must live; and it will adopt those institutions which are most liable to preserve and perpetuate its existence, irrespective of all abstract ideals of justice. We cannot avoid that conclusion. It is according to the fundamental laws of history. The attempt to act contrary to it would be like attempting to move the earth out of its orbit. Whoever attacks individual ownership of wealth, must show that there is a substitute for it which will serve equally well in securing the means of subsistence for the human race. Mankind could not live, unless there were a powerful incentive on the part of some individuals to the accumulation of property. Most men like to "live as they go."

Private property survives as an institution first and supremely *because it makes provision for the necessities of existence for human society*. That is its economic basis. It has seemed to furnish the best incentive for a production and accumulation of wealth, which should be adequate in amount to keep the race of man alive and permit of its growth and expansion. Whether this will always be so, is another question. Human nature may change. Institutions, however, which would be ideally the most perfect in coming centuries, might prove very unsatisfactory under present conditions. An agent stronger than even our idealism will still hold sway; and that is, the struggle on the part of human society for its own life and preservation. That is the factor which in the long run must determine all economic institutions. On this matter we are at the mercy of grim necessity.

The ablest minds appear to be abandoning the search after a principle of absolute justification for private property. We might quote from leading authorities in England, Germany, and America. They admit its defects; they do not claim that it is ideally perfect. One after another they rest it on a basis of expediency. "What have you to offer that is better?" would be their proposition. We may be most reluctant to concede to their position; and yet we are driven to admit that on this whole subject the first right to answer belongs to political economy.

Does this leave us, then, without any principle of justification for private property? Must we view our entire social fabric simply as a compromise with

necessity? Expediency seems a poor substitute for justice.

Human opinion, however, is drifting in the direction of another standpoint which may still justify this institution. It is the conviction that private ownership, as a principle of right, exists by the tacit consent of society. This may be the clue to the whole problem. If the view is correct, it would give the present social structure a basis of justification. It would also account for the circumstance that people cling so tenaciously to the fact of individual ownership of some kind, in spite of all the scruples brought against it.

The world does seem to give this tacit consent, although men may not be always conscious of it. The vast majority say and *feel* with reference to one thing or another, "This is mine." But if they have that feeling towards any object, whatever it may be, they have accepted the *principle* of individual ownership. The person who clings with a sense of possession to the smallest coin in his pocket, has voluntarily given adhesion to one of the great institutions of our present civilization. It is because that sense of possession, in some form or another, prevails so generally in the individual consciousness, that private property may be said to have received the sanction of civilized society.

Both law and philosophy indirectly seem to make the elemental supposition that mankind, *as a race*, is the ultimate earthly owner of all existing wealth. It is to the organized brotherhood of our fellows everywhere that we owe what we are. We call it sometimes "society," at other times the "state" or

the "nation." Whatever agent may be its nearest representative, will necessarily act by its right and authority. One cannot be said to own anything exactly by "one's own right." If it were not for this "State" or "society," as an organized brotherhood, men could not live for a day. We depend on its labours in order to be able to reap the fruits of our own labours. Without its protection we could not hold our property for an hour. It alone makes private ownership possible, because it alone secures us in that form of ownership. It therefore creates and grants the right, and so gives the basis of justification.

We hold all that we possess *as a trust*. That is the position which the ablest minds of to-day appear to be taking on the subject of property. We are each and all acting as stewards for society. What belongs to us is not ours to do with altogether as we please. But it is our private wealth, to be used in the service of mankind, by whose aid and assistance it has come to us and by whose sanction we call it "ours." Any person who disposes of it without keeping that fact in mind, is proving himself unworthy of possessing property.

In taking this attitude, we do nothing more nor less than revert to the original religious sanction. It is the same in thought, although different in language. Men have been accustomed to say that they looked upon their possessions as entrusted to them by God. Everything was to be used in the service of that Being. "Why?" Because it was to that Power they owed their existence and the means by which they had acquired their wealth. But that

conviction has influence upon us only when interpreted with more definite meaning. It is mankind which, here on earth, has been made the agent or representative of the Author of the Universe.

Human society is the direct and immediate source to which we owe the privileges of life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and the possession of property. We receive our opportunities, our capacities, the resources of existence, the strength to labour, even our very being, from the whole race of man to which we belong,—the fathers and brothers now living, and the vast, infinite multitude who have gone to their rest. Through their efforts, their work, and their sacrifices, we are where we are at our present stage of civilization. What we possess and what we earn, is to be held and used in trust for that brotherhood. By first acknowledging our stewardship to humanity, we confess it in a higher sense to the Supreme Being.

Again we must call attention to the fact that this is not the view or attitude of any one set of men. I am seeking to trace the common tendencies of modern thought in reference to property. This sense of stewardship exhibits itself in a great variety of ways. It forms the basis of private conduct, of the acts of legislatures, and of the teachings of writers on ethics and economics.

The most striking form in which this attitude of mind towards property has begun to display itself, is in reference to the matter of bequest. Why is it that so many men, before they retire from earth, wish to leave some portion of their possessions to public institutions, to the service of the great brotherhood

of mankind, instead of devoting it all to their immediate families? Is it not a tacit recognition on their part of a state of indebtedness towards their fellow-men? Do they not confess, by such an act, a sense of stewardship towards humanity? Is it not a faint effort to pay off *something* of that obligation? We can also recognize a similar spirit among certain men at the present day, who do not feel quite at liberty to spend *all* the wealth which has fallen to them by inheritance. It is their private property. And yet somehow they are conscious that it has come to them as a kind of trust, which they should hand down in part to future generations. There is an element of moral opprobrium which attaches especially to the extravagant use of inherited wealth. Thus we see indications that the principle of the stewardship of property is beginning more and more to dominate public opinion.

Human society appears, therefore, to be moving towards a solution of the problem. It cannot appeal to the reverence for fixed institutions, as a basis for private property. We do not settle the question by asserting that it was established by the laws of nature or the will of God. We cannot say that it has always existed, and therefore will necessarily survive. We may not even support it on the supposition that a man is entitled to the fruits of his own labour. But it does find better justification than mere expediency. We can believe that it is right to own property because it is sanctioned by the original owner of all wealth,—human society itself. It is thus that we begin to bridge the chasm which seemed to exist between conflicting sentiments of justice. We are

still left to battle in mind over all those special scruples as to the ownership of particular kinds of property. Ethical science in this its first proposition has only made a beginning in dealing with the great problem. Until this issue is settled, the whole subject will be in a state of confusion.

A man can still justify himself in refusing to "divide" at the arbitrary demand of another. He may answer, "It is not through you alone that I have been able to acquire these possessions. Your labour has not been the only factor. I hold this, not in trust for you individually, but for all society. When that authority demands it and will use it justly, I stand ready to give it up. What you yourself possess, though it be only one small coin, is held by the same principle of right. You, too, when the ideal condition of affairs has arrived, may be called upon to cut that coin in two and share it with the brother who is lower in the scale of being, or less happy and fortunate than yourself. But until that time comes, we each remain the 'executors of our respective trusts.'" We are speaking, of course, only with reference to the abstract principle which justifies the *idea* of private property, and not as to the question how the wealth may have come into one's possession. In that regard each case would have to be judged by itself. We have been using the term "wealth," also, in the economic sense, whether existing as wages, income, or capital.

At first thought it might seem as if this standpoint to which opinion is drifting, offers a very insecure basis for private property. I am inclined to take the other view. The institution is more likely to survive

if this attitude of mind rapidly becomes universal. A revolution might occur if men refuse to recognize their stewardship as the owners of wealth. What the iconoclast especially desires is, that men may show themselves defiantly selfish and regardless of their responsibilities to society. It gives him the basis of his appeal for an overthrow. He is able to say, "This is what private property leads to." Civilization, however, is naturally conservative. If people only show an honest and conscientious desire to be true to their trust, it will be a long time before the revolution takes place. Under such conditions the changes would come gradually. Modifications of the principle might be introduced. But the most radical measures will not be tried, unless there is a clear and hopeless misuse of the trust on the part of the present owners.

Under any circumstances an institution can only continue to live in so far as it is rooted in the convictions and sentiments of the great majority. It is because the wage-earner says in his heart "This is mine" of what is paid him on Saturday night, that the capitalist is secure in thinking "This is mine" of the income from his investments. They both accept the *idea* of private ownership. Change that sentiment and there will be a revolution. But sentiments of that kind are most conservative. It requires a violent shock to overthrow them, if they have been long in existence. And so it is often said that if the present civilization were suddenly demolished, society would revive with many of the same institutions. Up to the present time the sense of ownership appears rooted in human nature itself; and that is why the

principle of private property dominates our civilization. But if the owners of wealth abuse their trust, that will certainly menace the principle.

We cannot prophesy that an institution of this kind will continue throughout all eternity. The same agent which called it into existence may ultimately change it or remove it altogether. The power rests where it has always held its seat,—in the hearts and wills of the people. As Friedrich Paulsen, one of the leading and most conservative writers on ethics in Europe, aptly remarks: "If it is true that expediency supports us in our private property, if it is true that we hold it by the consent of society as a trust for the race, the same expediency may finally demand that we surrender it, the same society may withdraw its consent and ask that the trust be used otherwise." But a change of that kind never comes suddenly. Men would only discover it by comparing one century with another.

It is true, that in discussing what justifies private ownership, we have not gone very far into the problem of property. Ethical science, like economics, is often very unsatisfactory when it attempts to deal with the burning questions of the day. It has a great deal to say about abstract principles; but on practical issues it is slow to help us out of our difficulties. We almost wish it would leave the cloud-land of speculation for a while and come down to our everyday life. Human nature, which has been growing more refined in its scruples, may by and by harden again, unless it finds some method for interpreting those scruples. The conscience of to-day is remarkably sensitive about some things and singularly cal-

lous about others. It appeals for enlightenment to the science of ethics.

It is to be hoped that ethics will respond to the appeal. The unusual sensitiveness which is manifest in reference to the element of right and wrong in the ownership of property, ought not to be allowed to die away. The best and clearest minds of the present time should give it their closest attention. The principle of the stewardship of wealth must receive a *positive, definite meaning*. We do not sanction it by simply feeling it to be true, but by acting up to it. The main issue is still before us, when we ask how to apply the principle. How can men show that they regard their possessions as a trust for society? Should they hold it, spend it, or give it away? They have to determine what it implies to be an executor of a trust. They themselves are a part of organized society. Can they honestly and conscientiously devote a large portion of what is in their hands to their own uses? Ought they not to distribute it in giving labour to others? Men are groping about for an answer. But it is most encouraging that they care for an answer at all. Even a spasmodic recognition of the principle is of some value.

I have only ventured to suggest an introductory thought on this great subject. It may seem a dry and barren topic to the idealist. There is something so materialistic about the very idea of property. It appears to contaminate the people who deal with it. Refined natures shrink from the touch of it. And yet by the higher methods used in reference to it, we can mark both the ethical and religious progress of mankind. It is of the earth, earthy; but when we

say "thine" and "mine" in speaking of it, we make it the temple of ideal forces which are to shape the higher destinies of the world.

We can but hope that writers on ethics will realize more and more the importance of this whole subject. A vast field for the most searching investigation lies before us. The higher life of the race of man hangs in the balance. As yet human society has only just begun to grasp the first principle. Even that, however, is a great deal.

We can still say, "This is mine." But, just as men have been accustomed to look upward and add, "To be used in Thy service because Thou hast given it to me," so also, as they look *outward* over the race of men to which they belong, while thinking "This is mine," they should whisper solemnly, addressing now, on the other hand, the vast human brotherhood, "*to be used in thy service because thou hast given it to me.*" From this standpoint we can still justify Private Property.

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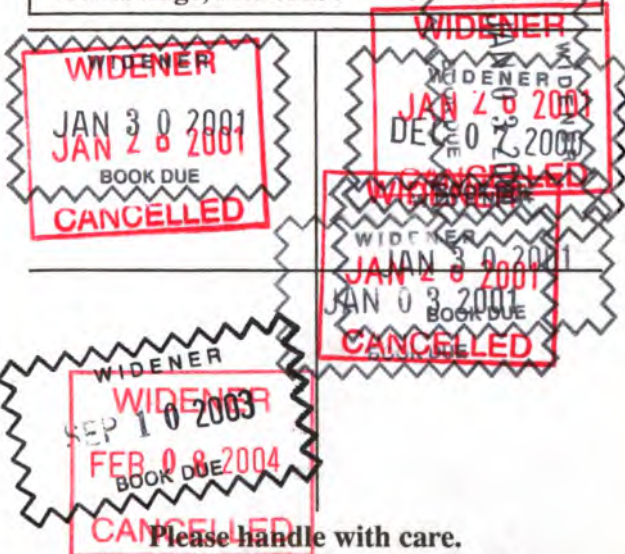
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